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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXV. No. 629. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1943 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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AS BETWEEN ALLIES

FEW men who have risen, as Vice-President Wallace has done, to the second place in the confidence of a great democracy, retain his gift of frank and open speech. There is much else that is important and interesting in his two latest speeches, but for all of us one thing stood out—his warning against the errors of policy that will fatally lead us, if we commit them, into World-war No. 3. Of these he mentioned several, but on two of them he dwelt with special emphasis. "That war will be probable, in case we double-cross Russia." The words rang out with merciless simplicity, but he made them, if possible, even more pointed when he said that "unless the Western democracies and Russia come to a satisfactory understanding before the war ends, I very much fear that World-war No. 3 will be inevitable." The inference is that such an understanding does not exist to-day, in spite of the fact that a formal treaty binds Great Britain to the Soviet Union, not merely as her ally for the duration of the war, but for a period of twenty years.

Mr. Wallace, needless to say, has ampler information before him than the rest of us possess. The State Department is under fire in America as well as on this side of the Atlantic, for its conduct in North Africa and its complacency towards General Franco and other exponents of a clerical brand of Fascism. But those of us who read its collection of documents on the origins of this war were impressed and even startled by the foresight and the trenchant accuracy in diagnosis of the despatches it received from its embassies and consulates in Germany and Japan. If American policy in the years before Pearl Harbour is open to criticism, such fault as there was cannot be traced to its service of information. But even without access to the mail bags carried by diplomatic couriers, it is only too easy to perceive the signs of tension and mistrust. It was more than a momentary pressure of affairs that accounted for the absence not merely of Stalin himself but of any of his lieutenants, whether soldiers or civilians, from the Casablanca Conference. Rightly or wrongly, fairly or unfairly, the feeling of the Russians is that on land we are leaving to them a wholly disproportionate share of the losses and burdens of the war. A Power which has entertained this feeling through nearly two years of disappointment will not stop there. It will infallibly peer into motives. It will not be content to say that we and the Americans are excessively slow or unduly cautious. It will ask whether very influential persons are in the secret calculations of Britain not ill-pleased that Russia's man-power should be worn down by the long battle she has waged all but single-handed. It will ask why Washington insists on creating an army of a size that seems too big to use in World-war No. 2. It will also ask whether the Western Democracies are husbanding their own strength, so that when the enemy is brought by Russian sacrifices to the verge of collapse, they may at little cost to themselves dictate a settlement that suits their interests. These are cynical guesses, but in their dealings with the Western Powers have the Russians, from the days of armed intervention down to the betrayal at Munich, often seen our policy in a light which compelled them to form a habit of generous interpretation?

Of course the suspicions of the Soviet Union are themselves one of the factors in increasing this lack of confidence. Neither in Moscow nor abroad have Russians been allowed to mix easily with citizens of the Western Democracies. They guard their secrets with jealous care. Admiral Standley has created a furore by pointing out that the Soviet Union is slow to give credit to their allies, but especially to the Americans, for the material aid we have sent them. But these are not the decisive factors that will determine our future relationship. That depends on one question which dwarfs all the rest: how soon and how hard shall we strike our blow on land in the decisive theatre, which is Continental Europe? If at the close of the struggle in Europe our relations are no better than they are to-day, what importance can be given to talk of setting up any effective world-authority? Russia in her present mood might agree to confer and discuss, but would she abandon one jot of her sovereignty to share it with allies who have failed to win her confidence? To put the question with more precision: would she be likely to lessen her weight of armaments because she felt that she could entrust her safety to an International Force, whose control and personnel she would have to share with the United States and Great Britain? But if huge national armaments survive this war under national control, with what degree of confidence can we hope to avoid World-war No. 3? Sooner or later, as Mr. Wallace predicted, one side or the other will use Germany—and he might have added Japan—to adjust the balance of power in its own favour.

The other danger to which the Vice-President devoted most of his attention lies within capitalism. Four times over, in slightly different words, he declared that war will once more be "probable" unless what he called "the democratic capitalistic nations" can "demonstrate that the consuming power of their people can be made to equal their productive power." He was here rather nearer than he may have realised to the analysis of the economic causation of war and imperialist expansion as Marx first stated it, or as J. A. Hobson put it, and after Hobson, Lenin. Mr. Wallace believes that the thing can be done within the capitalist system. He stipulates that there must be full employment and full utilisation of natural resources. He assumes that the more advanced industrial Powers will supply capital equipment to the less advanced primary producers on credit terms without in any way infringing their liberties. Finally, he stipulates, as Mr. Sumner Welles did in equally clear language a few days earlier, that these same advanced Powers, and especially the U.S.A., will lower their tariffs so as to permit the debtor States to pay for this capital equipment in consumers' goods. These are large and difficult assumptions. They imply a degree of control over the division of the product of industry which would end the capitalist system as we have hitherto known it. They presuppose an equally intelligent and authoritative control of capital investment on an international scale, so contrived that it will guarantee the debtor States against political pressure and penetration. They assume

in such a country as the United States an industrial electorate so confident that full employment is assured that it will abandon high protection. Unless all these conditions are realised, this international New Deal will be no more stable than the restrictive capitalism of the past; and it will lapse into something not markedly different from the old imperialism, which always had in it the seeds of war. Mr. Wallace has in large outlines laid down some of the chief conditions of an enduring peace, but does even he, bold thinker though he is, realise how immense a shift he is demanding in the balance of class power within democracies which "They" (to use Sir Stafford Cripps' phrase) have hitherto ruled and not "the common man"?

Yugoslav Deadlock

Negotiations, if such we can call them, between the Soviet and Yugoslav Governments, have reached a deadlock. No reply has yet been sent to the Soviet note at the end of January in which specific charges were made against General Mihailovitch of co-operation with both German and Italian forces in Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, Axis forces have begun a new offensive aimed at isolating the partisan fighters, who are being driven back into the mountains of Montenegro. The fact that Ustachi and Chetniks, who a year ago were fighting each other, are to-day co-operating in this campaign against the partisans shows how far the situation has developed in the resistance movement. This is not a local matter; it concerns the whole problem of European resistance, and raises sharply the issues which still remain unsettled in North Africa. Is it Allied policy to co-operate with the Yugoslav Government in London in building up a Darlan situation in good time before any allied landing in the Balkans? Or are the diplomatic comings and goings in the Mediterranean only part of an ingenious scheme to find in Italy people who are not revolutionary and who might be prepared for the "unconditional surrender" demanded at Casablanca? Monsignor Spellman has had four talks with the Pope; Sir Samuel Hoare is now going to Gibraltar to talk things over with him. The experience of North Africa justifies suspicions that similar schemes are again under discussion.

A National Medical Service?

The Government has this week opened its consultations with the medical profession about the form and structure of the new national medical service which it has pledged itself to set up in accordance with one of the major recommendations of the Beveridge Report. Sir John Anderson has done all he can to give these discussions a bad start by announcing in advance both that nothing is to be done to abolish private practice for those who want it and that the position of the voluntary hospitals is to be fully safeguarded. He has thus, as spokesman of the War Cabinet, driven two large wedges into the notion of a comprehensive medical service for all; and now Mr. Ernest Brown, by going to the doctors to ask them what they would like before formulating any constructive proposals on behalf of the Government, is in process of driving in another wedge. It is, of course, entirely right that the doctors should be consulted at some stage; but are they to be allowed to draft the Government scheme, or has the Government any proposals of its own to make? Doctors are very important people; but far more people who are not doctors are vitally concerned in the structure of the new medical service. The panel patients, for example, could tell the Government a good deal about the different treatment meted out by many doctors to them and to private patients; and the poor could tell Mr. Ernest Brown a good deal he probably does not know about the pleasure of being an out-patient of a voluntary hospital. We believe that what most of the public wants is what Sir William Beveridge recommends—a comprehensive public medical service. But, from the way things are shaping, we do not believe that is what the public is likely to get at the hands of Sir John Anderson and Mr. Ernest Brown.

Talking about Trade and Money

Serious discussion seems to have begun at last about the future of international trade and exchange. It is high time, for the subject is ticklish, and a lot of talking will be necessary before it will be faced in a realistic spirit. The phrases of the Atlantic Charter are of very little help when it is a question of getting down to brass tacks; for no proclamations about the freedom of commerce will avail unless ways and means can be found of arranging for actual exchange in a world of unstable currencies and unbalanced balances of payments. One big question is what to tackle first—apart from the problems of immediate relief, which have been under discussion for some time already—currency, or tariffs and other forms of import control. Obviously, tariffs are difficult; for the Americans have a simple belief that tariffs are moral, whereas all other forms of import restriction are traceable to original sin. Currency is also difficult; for there is a serious danger that the exponents of orthodox banking may persuade the British and American Governments to adopt, in the name of financial stabilisation, a currency system which will break down almost as soon as it is put to the test. What is wanted, if it can be got, is evidently some sort of multilateral clearing system which will prevent the tying down of trade to purely bilateral exchanges. But no such system can be made to work without American co-operation in a form which will involve large-scale financing of European exchanges with American money, under conditions bound to involve a good deal of risk. It is well that the talks are beginning, even though the present state of articulate American opinion is by no means propitious.

The Railway Dispute—Next Move?

Presumably the outcome of the Locomotive Engineers' second thoughts, now that their executive has called off the threatened strike, will be a fresh wage-application. Mr. Bevin could not well have taken any other course than that of refusing to regard as acceptable the demand that he should refer the award of the Railway Wages Tribunal for rehearing before the National Arbitration Tribunal; for to act on this proposal would have been to open the door very wide to similar demands whenever anyone was dissatisfied with an award. We were never among those who regarded the strike threat very seriously; it seemed to us evident that the men's leaders would recoil from carrying it into effect, and that, however the delegates might have voted, they could hardly have got solid support from their members for a strike policy at such a time as the present. The fact, however, remains that the Locomotive Engineers have a solid grievance. They are ill paid in relation to their skill and responsibility; and it is not easy to defend the Tribunal's award upon their claims. If they now put forward in proper form a fresh application, they will probably get an award at any rate partly in their favour; and few will grudge them such a result. Necessary as it is to keep in check any general rise in wages, which could only have an inflationary effect on prices unless it was all absorbed by additional savings, it is necessary to leave room for increases in special cases, when highly skilled bodies of workers have been left behind in the upward movement of earnings. The Locomotive Engineers are a special case; and their claims should not be prejudiced by the mistake they made in uttering a strike threat which probably most of them never seriously meant to carry out.

Liberty of the Subject

Judging by a recently reported case in London, any of us is likely to be pulled up by a policeman nowadays and asked what is in the parcel or "if we would care to" display the contents of a suit case. Before the war this could happen only in London, half a dozen big provincial cities, and about two counties, because there only were the police empowered by local Acts to "stop, search, and detain" people whom they *reasonably* suspected of having property which had been stolen or unlawfully obtained. At the moment the Defence Regulations enable a constable in any part of the country, if he reasonably suspects that you have improperly obtained rationed or controlled goods, to take you into custody. So a lot still depends on the word "reasonably." Rather surprisingly, the police seem in this respect to have weathered the storm that followed the 1938 case of Ludlow *v.* Shelton, in which a young actor was arrested in Kensington High Street for carrying his own overcoat over his arm while wearing another one. The police thought the spectacle so strange that they closed in on him and asked him a lot of questions, which he was perhaps foolish (though quite justified) in refusing to answer; he later maintained that he didn't know they were police officers. He was released after giving an explanation at the police station and in due course he got £300 damages in the High Court for assault and false imprisonment because (said Lord Hewart) the police suspicions were not reasonable. The position still seems to be that a suspicion based on unsatisfactory answers to questions is not enough; unless it does turn out that you were carrying stolen articles or black market produce the police run a big risk if they take you into custody. Our liberties have worn thinner during the war, but the fabric still holds in places.

Civil Aviation in the House (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Some months ago a drive was under way from the progressive side of the House in favour of taking over the war industries in order to speed production. Little progress was achieved, and the counter-attack of private enterprise is now in full swing. In response to Bellenger's persistent questioning the Postmaster-General admitted that an agreement had been made with Kodak for the airgraphing of letters to and from the Middle East. The Post Office refused to give any satisfactory reason about why they did not operate this service themselves, but were forced under Labour pressure to limit the agreement for the period of the war.

The battle over civil aviation is fiercer, and there are many cross-currents. Tired of paying out large subsidies for inefficient operation, the Government took over Imperial Airways and British Airways just before the war and merged them into British Overseas Airways Ltd. In setting up the public corporation, compensation, regarded by many as excessive, was paid to shareholders, the value of whose shares had been largely created by Government subsidy. To the surprise of everyone, most of the men who had failed in running these companies were left in charge of the new corporation. Frightened by wartime American enterprise in trans-Atlantic aviation the British shipowners have seen the red light. Shipping interests and aviation firms have therefore started a campaign to break the monopoly of British Overseas Airways on the ground that competition is essential for the development of this new industry, and that the shipping companies must be able to enter this field. The fact that men such as Runciman are connected both with shipping and with British Overseas Airways lends support for the widespread feeling among the staff of the public corporation that initiative and efficiency in its ranks are purposely being stifled to justify a surrender to vested interests.

The battle is further complicated by the plans being put forward to internationalise civil aviation possibly through both European and trans-Atlantic trusts. There is much support outside aviation circles for unifying European services as a measure of controlling armaments as well as of developing transport. In some British circles, however, there is distrust of proposals for internationalising trans-Atlantic services, as it is feared this would mean placing them under American domination.

HITLER'S POLITICAL OFFENSIVE

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT and Mr. Churchill will not, we hope, under-estimate the importance, or mistake the significance, of the developments in Europe which have accompanied Hitler's proclamation of February 24th. The material message in the speech, which was read for the Führer owing to his inability (so it was said) to leave his Field Headquarters, ran as follows: "Germany will now really start to gather and use all its strength to a degree unparalleled in the history of mankind. . . . We shall carry out a mobilisation of the spiritual and material values of Europe such as our Continent has never before witnessed in its several thousand years history." Here we have not merely the defiant answer of National Socialism to Casablanca and "unconditional surrender," but a clear indication of the "total" strategy with which Hitler and his associates hope to counter the growing threat to the *Wehrmacht* on the eastern front. Within the "fortress of Europe," now faced with imminent siege, there is to be a deliberately sensationalised *levée en masse* of Herrenvolk, satellite "freemen" and "occupied" slaves alike; and the slogan which is to stimulate this spiritual and material mobilisation (note the significant order of priority in which the values are placed) is to be the cry that the Bolshevik barbarians are at the gate.

This does not mean that Hitlerite Germany is not in fact endeavouring to cope with an increasingly intractable material problem of production and man-power. The attempt, foreshadowed by the Führer's proclamation, to solve it is to be seen in a series of drastic decrees enacting civil mobilisation both within and without the Reich itself. Casualties—dead, prisoners and crippled—on the eastern front, approaching probably the two million mark in the past twelve months alone, have sharply accentuated the dilemma in which the German High Command is placed. Even if, without Baku, oil supplies can be assured by greatly expanded synthetic production—and this assumption is doubtful in the event of large-scale military operations continuing throughout the year, summer and winter—the ability of the Axis area to feed itself and withstand sea-blockade depends on retention of the grain-bearing lands of western Russia and, above all, the Ukraine. This, however, involves from a strictly military standpoint the defence of a line so extended, and requiring such lengthy communications that replacement of army losses must be made good, even at the expense of the Reich's essential factory and farm man-power. The point, it can be safely assumed, has already been reached beyond which importation of foreign labour into German industry and agriculture cannot be carried without grave danger both to efficiency of production and security. Neither Funk, Reich Minister of Economics, nor Himmler can feel very happy at having to rely on the efforts and submissiveness of the 6,000,000 foreign workers who have been conscripted and transferred to the Reich. Thus, with the generals insisting on a further drastic comb-out of civilian personnel in order to fill the great gaps torn by the Red Army in the *Wehrmacht's* field strength, the only course was to carry further the process of mobilising, first, in Germany such persons (mostly women) as were not yet "gainfully employed" and of transferring labour from relatively less essential jobs to war industries; and, secondly, to extend this régime of total mobilisation to all occupied and satellite countries.

This is the course which is, in fact, being adopted. In the Reich proper a decree, issued by Sauckel (Reich Minister of Labour), compels every man from 16 to 65 and every woman from 17 to 45 to "contribute by exertion and work to the war." A further decree, of which Funk is the author, provides for still more drastic concentration in the retail, catering and entertainment trades and for the practical elimination of small-scale skilled enterprise: with few exceptions the independent artisan and the owner of the single-handed shop are to be driven into the armament industries to fill the places of workers combed-out to make good the losses of Stalingrad, the Caucasus and the Donets. These measures set the pattern for similar enactments in occupied or satellite territories. For example, in Norway a decree by the Quisling administration has enacted the closing of all establishments not essential for the war, and the conscription for war-work of all males from 18 to 55 and all females between 21 and 40. In Holland, Finland, Greece, Jugoslavia and Belgium comparable measures of industrial conscription have been either enacted or foreshadowed. Throughout the Baltic States and in Hungary farming and forestry are to be screwed up to a new pitch of intensity. Even in Italy there have been decrees lengthening the minimum working week and forbidding the employment of males in certain classes of trades and services—the intention being clearly to enforce transfer of labour to more essential industry or agriculture. Except, however, in the case of Dutchmen, there is no indication that it is intended to transfer to Germany many of the workers newly mobilised for industry or released from non-essential undertakings. There is still, apparently, a demand for such skilled French labour as Laval can continue to impress for service in the Reich; but the principle which Goebbels enunciated in his Sportspalast speech on February 18th—that, if the German army was to bleed in the Continent's defence, the rest of Europe must at least work—is evidently being interpreted in practice to mean that the work must be done within the boundaries of each enslaved state. The great Sixth Column of conscripted foreign workers within the Reich is not to be further augmented.

Will the plan work? Will it yield results commensurate with Axis needs? And is there any reason to suppose that the leaders of Nazi Germany are really relying on these or any economic measures to avert defeat? The answer is almost certainly, No. In the first place, although Hitler declares that only now (*nun erst recht*) is 100 per cent. civilian mobilisation for total war beginning, the truth is that in Germany the policy of concentrating production and labour, by compulsory standardisation and rationalisation, has been rigorously pursued ever since the autumn of 1941. The area of recruiting fresh entrants into war industries has already been greatly narrowed. The agricultural labour force, heavily depleted by the *Wehrmacht's* recent demands, may be replenished with a couple of hundred thousand women; and the renewed combing of craftsmen, small shopkeepers and workers in the tobacco, clothing, catering and entertainment trades may result in transfers to munition factories of numbers sufficient on paper to replace perhaps half a million men drafted for the army. Even so it is difficult to see how a considerable decline in the *Wehrmacht's* field strength can be avoided. The numbers in the 1925 class, now with the colours, represent barely 20 per cent. of last year's losses and even the desperate expedient of sending most of the 1926 class to the front this year would not cover probable current wastage. On the basis of the available data it seems safe to conclude that the German army at the beginning of the 1943 summer campaign will not be far short of a million below the strength of a year ago. Furthermore, the present "total" comb-out of reserved men in factory and farm will make it almost impossible to maintain output at the (probably about stationary) level of 1941–42. The new industrial recruits will be largely unskilled and, in many cases, of indifferent physique; and the extreme concentration of retail distribution and services now enforced is bound, indirectly, to have adverse reactions on industrial productivity through the added strain on workers imposed by difficulties in shopping and general living conditions.

As for the conscription of workers in occupied and satellite countries, the reserves of labour still disposable cannot be large. Already most enterprises in such countries as Holland, Norway and Czechoslovakia are working to German orders. In Italy, Rumania, Hungary and Finland mobilisation of armed forces has by this time depleted farm labour to the minimum; and the same thing applies to the agricultural *Volksgruppe* in the Baltic States. Finally, in Greece and the Balkans, where partisan resistance is a far from negligible factor, increased efficiency of labour, whether for para-military purposes—roads, fortications, etc.—or for general production is most unlikely to be secured without a force of overseers and administrators which the Reich cannot afford to provide.

The conclusion which emerges is that Germany's military and industrial power has passed its peak. She faces a fatal dilemma—an army numerically too weak to defend the optimum *Grossraum*, or a *Grossraum* too curtailed to be self-sufficient. If organisation cannot solve it, what is the real significance of this pretence that Europe can be, and will be saved for the New Order by a transition, at last, to really total war? The answer, we suggest, is to be found in Hitler's reference to the "spiritual values" which he declared his intention of mobilising and whose mobilisation is already being whipped up by every device of Nazi political warfare. He hopes to defend the fortress of Europe for a further period during which the resources of propaganda can be more successfully exploited within the Continent and against the Allies.

The total effort for which the Continent is being conscripted is the psychological complement of the barrage of propaganda designed to convince both the enslaved peoples and their would-be liberators, the Western Allies, that National Socialism alone bars the gate against the "Bolshevik hordes." It may well, indeed, be the calculation of the German Propaganda Ministry that, the more completely the life and work of Europe can be harnessed into war activities, the more will the mentality of the average man and woman be unconsciously "conditioned" into acceptance of the anti-Communist crusade.

For the United Nations this strategy adopted by the enemy has two dangers. One is the possibility that the existing lack of full co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and the Governments of the Western Allies may be converted by insidious Axis propaganda into an open rift. Should the establishment of a second front in western Europe be long delayed, with resulting unpalatable recriminations from Moscow, that possibility may become unpleasantly real. But, since the British Government (if not the U.S. State Department) is well aware that without the Red Army the outlook for Britain would be tragic, the other danger is greater and more immediate. It is that the Western Allies may appear in the eyes of democrats in Europe to have so compromised themselves by their commitments to anti-democratic associates—Giraud, Mihailovitch and similar elements in London and Washington—and by their undisguised friendship towards naked Fascism in Spain, that their offer of liberty at the price of co-operation in defeating Germany seems illusory and unreal. In that case apathy and cynicism might strengthen the forces that make for collaboration. To-day Hitler everywhere meets with stubborn resistance. But if the Allies continue to delay and to give the impression of wishing to set up reactionary puppets instead of releasing popular forces, and if Russia, having expelled the invader, were to disinterest herself from operations and political settlements in the West, Hitler might still be able to confront Britain and the U.S.A. with a well-nigh impregnable empire. The enslaved peoples would have lost confidence in the purpose of their rescuers.

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ALLIES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

[This is the third of our series of articles on resistance movements. The first on Yugoslavia appeared on February 6th; the second on Norway was published on February 20th.]

THE Nazis might have had a relatively easy time in Czechoslovakia. Munich was a great success for them; its memory provided them with fertile soil for propaganda against the Western Powers. The Quisling President of the Protectorate, Dr. Hacha, aims, as he once told the Czechs, to make the country "one of the most perfect parts of the great German Reich."

Czechoslovakia was occupied by German troops on March 15th, 1939. The Germans regard the domination of this territory in the heart of Europe as essential for the domination of the whole continent. "Berlin–Prague–Vienna, these are the foundation pillars, given by nature and evolved by history of the German interior Axis," one of their emissaries told an audience in Prague.

It would be foolish to deny that the Nazis have made a certain headway, although there is daily proof, as we shall see later, that four years of intensive economic, political and administrative occupation have failed to destroy the spirit of democracy which the world has grown to associate with Czechoslovakia.

Immediately after Munich, German capital poured into the Protectorate and into Slovakia. The Nazis absorbed Czech banking business when they occupied Prague. Slovakia, nominally independent, is under almost complete German financial and industrial domination. The Reichswerke Hermann Göring seized the lignite mines, took over the Skoda works, most of the big ironworks, and bought up the most up-to-date anthracite mines in Central Europe. I.G. Farbenindustrie seized the Usti chemical works. In Slovakia, copper mines, petroleum mines, coal and chemical industries were at once taken over by German concerns.

To this concentration of industry must be added the concentration of workers. In the Protectorate, the National Trade Union Centre for Workers was formed to take the place of the previous 700 different trade unions; in Slovakia there is one single trade union.

In Germany's war against the Soviet Union, the great arms factories of Czechoslovakia have provided a vast quantity of arms and munitions. The Russians, realising to their cost the tremendous importance of Czech supplies, have invariably directed their propaganda to the factory workers. "The Germans shell us from your guns," the men and commanders of the 25th Red Army Guards Division broadcast in an appeal last September. "Czech workers, Slav brothers," it continued, "put an end to this disgraceful situation. Refuse to produce armaments for your hangmen." Again, last September, on the eve of the Stalingrad campaign, the Czechoslovak Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. broadcast from Kuibyshev: "Experts estimate that Czech industry has fully equipped 100 German divisions. . . . The sufferings of all the European peoples are being prolonged because the Czech factories and the Czech workers in them are serving Hitler. . . . Don't wait any longer. . . . The Nazis are afraid of you. . . . They know that when the industrial front begins to crack the army in the field will be faced with great danger." In the same talk, M. Firlinger reminded his invisible audience of the bombs dropped by the Luftwaffe in the autumn of 1940–41 on English towns and cathedrals, hospitals and museums, which did not explode, but which contained messages from Czech workers saying that this was their contribution to the Allied cause.

Sabotage in the arms factories goes on all the time, but it reached the largest proportions in the autumn of 1939, and again when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in June, 1941. In 1939, so many cases were reported in the Skoda works in Pilsen that the Gestapo finally announced that every tenth worker would be punished whenever similar incidents occurred again. At this the workers left the factory and began a demonstration which lasted until troops arrived and trained machine-guns on them. Since that time, the Skoda works have been under strict military supervision. In 1941 a study of German official reports shows widespread sabotage, especially in the armaments factories of the Protectorate and the iron works of Slovakia; and a great deal of "go-slow" work with its resultant inefficiency. The Nazis responded by sending Heydrich to deal with the resistance movement: the first move in his reign of terror was the Decree declaring a state of emergency "in order to put an end to incidents of an extraordinary character."

Reports from the German frontier last October show that all the workers in one department of the Skoda works at Pilsen with their families were shot for sabotage and one in ten of the workers in an aircraft factory at Letov were sent to a concentration camp for the same reason. In November last two Czechs were hanged at Brno "by order of Himmler," for "being the ringleaders in a sabotage and terror gang."

Railway workers show their allegiance to the Allied cause by holding up transport in the most vital cross-roads from the Reich to the Eastern Front, to the Balkans and to Poland. By June, 1941, the efficiency of the Slovak railways had deteriorated by 75 per cent. and about 800 people had been arrested on charges of sabotage. Two Decrees show the seriousness of sabotage; the first decree in July stipulated punishment for holding up wagons, and the second, in November, dealt with the misuse of the railways, especially with workers who asked for more wagons than they could use. Yet, in October, 1942, the Nazi paper *Die Wirtschaft* complained about the shameful conditions of railway transport. Demurrage had to be paid on 1,723 more wagons in September than in August and 412,427 wagon "hours" were lost through inactivity in loading and unloading.

To the Czech workers who are the backbone of the resistance movement we must add thousands of students and intellectuals. In November, 1939, the Germans ordered the universities to be closed for three years, hoping that dispersal would prevent organised resistance. Thousands of students were arrested, 8,000 of them taken to German concentration camps, and many others treated with terrible brutality. When the time came to reopen the universities, State Secretary Frank announced that the ban would not be lifted as the Czech nation did not merit such a concession in view of their subversive activities and their stubborn attitude. The only "concession" he made was the promise that a certain number of Czech students should be allowed to continue their studies at the universities in the less polluted atmosphere of the Reich itself. The same speaker "gave the game away" when he performed the ceremony of naming the Embankment in Prague the "Reinhard Heydrich Embankment." Warning his audience against hostility to the Third Reich, he admitted that 90 per cent. of those who had been arrested after the assault on Heydrich were intellectuals.

The Czech quislings have tried to counteract the natural feelings of sympathy among the people for the Soviet Union. Moravec, the Minister of Education, last summer had the original propaganda idea of a visit to the Eastern front. On his return, he painted conditions of drabness compared with the gaily painted cottages and the pretty gardens of Czarist days. The wheat produced by a Kolkhoz near Kharkof, he described as so poor that a Bohemian miller would discard the lot. In October, 1942, he personally conducted a delegation of Czech workers and peasants to the occupied territories on the Eastern front—to Kief, Kharkof, and Sevastopol.

Hitler, of course, has had the support of a certain number of writers, journalists, and university lecturers, but few of them are people of any standing. Organisations such as the Vlajka, to which they belonged, are already discredited. In Slovakia, Nazi propaganda has made a certain headway; it found more fertile soil in the frustration of the Slovaks. Here the legal systems of Germany and Slovakia are embodied in a Treaty; there is active collaboration in the film world, and last May a German-Slovak cultural agreement was signed. It would seem probable that Slovak nationalism will be stronger at the end of the war than it was in the Munich days. The same is true of Sudeten-German nationalism.

Yet in Czechoslovakia as a whole the underground movement of resistance grows although everyone who works in it knows that the most likely punishment is execution. Nazi propaganda is answered by radio propaganda from London and from Moscow and by the underground press, leaflets, and by incredibly brave technicians whose messages are picked up in London and then rebroadcast by the Czech service of the B.B.C. All the regulations the Germans have made to tighten up their control of wireless have failed.

To sum up: the resistance movement in Czechoslovakia represents thousands of Allies whose devotion to the United Nations has withstood tremendously powerful Nazi propaganda, and the certainty of execution if it is discovered. Dr. Benes and his State Council in London, composed of members of all political parties, broadcast a special message to his citizens and our Allies on February 13th after the great victory at Stalingrad. To the quislings he threatened retribution. To the rest of the nation, he promised that he and his Council would lay down their mandates and offices and give an account of their work:

> "We shall humbly bow," he went on, "before our Czechs and Slovaks of all classes and spheres who did not permit themselves to be broken, who fought and conquered. They it was who bore and held the torch of truth in the hardest time, they it was who saved the nation at home, and they it will be who will raise the punishing sword in the hour of victory."

The Czech Government in London has carried on an active foreign policy which reflects the movement of public feeling in its own country. A Treaty with the British Government in August, 1942, stated that the final settlement of the Czech frontiers at the end of the war would not be influenced by any changes effected in and since 1938. Treaties with the Soviet Government and with Poland give the Czech Government the enviable distinction of achieving friendly relations with Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and Poland. Czech pilots fly with the R.A.F., Czech soldiers fight with the British Army, and a month ago the first and only foreign unit was formed in Russia and fights to-day on the Eastern Front. Thus, Czech resistance at home and a progressive policy in London combine to give this small country, of which we once knew nothing, an opportunity to play a special role in post-war Europe. And, in that Europe, the Czechs regard the Anglo-Soviet Alliance, with its guarantee of twenty years' peace, as the most important corner-stone.

TO BUILD—OR NOT TO BUILD

IT is generally admitted that the building industry is destined to occupy a key position in our economic system during the post-war years. This is the case, both because of the magnitude and urgency of the tasks which will face it immediately the war is over, and also because in any planned policy of "public works," building comes easily first among the industries which can be so regulated as to keep the levels of investment and employment high. Great Britain will both need a great deal of re-building and be in a position, after the most pressing needs have been met, to adjust the pace in order to fit in with the general employment situation. This second factor will, no doubt, come into play only after there have been some years of activity at the highest practicable level; for there will be so much urgent work waiting that for some time after the war it will be a question of building all we can rather than of adjusting the amount of building in accordance with any deliberate "anti-cycle" policy. But in the longer run this second factor will be

of prime importance; and in plans for reorganising the industry it should be kept continually in mind.

The Report on Training for the Building Industry* and the White Paper† based upon it—both recently issued—are the first public signs that the Government is getting ready to face this key problem. What happens in time of war is that normal building construction practically stops; repairs and renewals are postponed on an enormous scale; and what work is done (chiefly on aerodromes, camps, and new factories) is of a sort that uses a low proportion of skilled labour and affords hardly any opportunity for the training of apprentices. Many workers are shifted out of the industry, either into the Forces or into other occupations; and many small firms are driven out of business. The building industry is bound to emerge at the end of the war with a greatly depleted labour force, with no fresh flow of apprentices coming forward to replace the older craftsmen, and with a grave deficiency of "small men" for the vast number of urgent repair jobs that will need to be done. This depleted industry will have to face a situation in which there will be added to the normal annual demand for houses (we were building at an average rate of about 350,000 in the pre-war years) at least three kinds of abnormal demand: for making up arrears, for replacing bomb damage, and for re-planning town and country, including a large provision of agricultural cottages to replace unfit and obsolete dwellings.

This will present a formidable programme to an industry in which the requisite ratio of skilled to unskilled workers is bound to be high. Civil engineering work it will be relatively easy to expand rapidly; for it uses a much smaller proportion of skilled labour and much of the wartime equipment of the industry can be turned over to it without great difficulty or delay. Houses, even if we resort on a considerable scale to measures of pre-fabrication and standardised construction, it will be much harder to build quickly; and this also applies to schools needed for the new educational programme and to many other kinds of public and amenity building. It is self-evident that it will be necessary in expanding the industry rapidly, to bring into it from outside a large number of adults from the Forces and the munition works, picked as suitable persons for special training as skilled craftsmen. There will indeed be no alternative to this, even apart from the need for acting quickly; for there will not be nearly enough boys available, to spare the building industry more than a very limited quota for training as apprentices.

This is the problem with which an attempt is made to grapple in the Report of the Committee on Building Training—an attempt which is echoed much more faintly in the Government's White Paper. The Report, on what seem sufficient grounds, proposes a course of special training for adults extending normally over six months and prolonged where necessary. It proposes that there should be 70,000 training places for craftsmen, with further provision for the special training of instructors and of supervisory and managerial personnel. For craftsmen only, this is reckoned as implying, after allowance for wastage, an annual outflow of at least 100,000; and the Report proposes to spread the process over from 2½ to 3 years, giving a total of from 250,000 to 300,000 to be trained. The White Paper, with no reasons given, scales down this number to a *maximum* of 200,000, and proposes to spread the training over 3 or 4 years, which seems to imply a provision of training places at less than half the number proposed in the Report.

We cite these figures because they furnish the only clue in the White Paper to what the Government really proposes to do about housing and other forms of construction after the war. They suggest to us that the Government's notions of what will be needed are on an altogether inadequate scale. True, mention is made in the White Paper of the probable need to expand the building industry over a period to a labour force of about 1,250,000. This looks a formidable total; but it is necessary to enquire what it means. If it refers to the building industry in a narrow sense, it is difficult to believe that such a total can be reached by the scheme of training propounded in the White Paper: if it includes Civil Engineering as well as building proper, it has to be pointed out that it falls short by at least 150,000 of the numbers in the two industries combined before the war. This maximum figure of 1,250,000 insured workers is only 200,000 above the pre-war total for the building industry proper, and is quite inadequate to cope with the post-war problem, especially if this total is to be regarded, as it apparently is in the White Paper, as a *maximum* to be approached gradually over a period of years.

What disturbs us most of all about the Government's White Paper is that there is in it not a single sentence which effectively commits the Government to embark on any large-scale plan of post-war building. It seems as if the post-war building programme, like the Beveridge Report on Social Security, has been relegated to the category of social reforms in respect of which we are told to wait and see whether we can afford them, when all the projects of post-war development and welfare provision have been weighed in Sir Kingsley Wood's financial scales at the Treasury. The plain truth is that we shall be able to afford whatever we are equipped to produce, and that the building industry, by virtue of its relatively small dependence on imported materials, stands in an exceptionally favourable position for being "afforded," on any real calculation of post-war capacity to produce. We cannot help regarding with intense suspicion a Government White Paper which begins by scaling down by about 50 per cent. the estimates of the Committee on which it purports to be based, and, over and above this, carefully refrains from presenting any estimate at all of the amount of construction which is to be included in the post-war programme.

There is another point, equally significant, on which the White Paper falls a long way short of the Report on which it is nominally based. The Report recognised fully that, if good men are to be attracted to the building industry after the war, there will have to be some real guarantee of more stable employment than has existed in the past. Most builders are working at present under the Essential Work Order and enjoy in effect a guaranteed week and a guaranteed minimum level of earnings. We need to be told whether this situation is to continue, and whether it is proposed, in connection with the expansion of the industry, to offer, to those already in it and to those entering it after a special course of training, some guarantee of "full employment," carrying with it a promise of sustained building activity over a number of years. The Report of the Committee clearly contemplates that the Government should assume some measure of responsibility for the maintenance of regular employment; but the White Paper relegates this problem to the industry itself, making any guarantee of employment depend on the willingness of the industry to shoulder the burden.

This is a big issue, because the success of any system of emergency training will entirely depend on the spirit in which the entrants to the industry under the scheme of training are received by the employers and workers already in the industry. A six months' training will not avail to produce competent craftsmen unless it is followed up by measures, on the job, which will make the newcomer welcome and assure him the full co-operation of both employers and workmen in fitting him to work side by side with the qualified craftsman as an equal. But will the industry, unless it is assured that the Government really means to carry through a large-scale building programme over a reasonable number of years, be in practice willing to receive the incomers except as "dilutees," to be treated as a purely temporary addition to the labour force, and not to be trained on to become fully skilled, for fear of exposing the workers already in the industry to serious risks of unemployment should the Government, as actually occurred after the last war, decide after all to curtail its building programme in the interests of "national economy"? If the emergency recruits are allowed to enter the industry with a stigma of inferiority fastened upon them, is it likely that the best men out of the armed Forces or the munition factories will be induced to sign on in any numbers for special training as building craftsmen? Can this be secured without some guarantee of employment for the existing body of workers, as well as for the new recruits? To throw the problem back on the industry itself, as the White Paper does, is to invite the collapse of the entire scheme.

The Government must be made to see that this will not do. Any scheme of training ought to be related to a clearly defined programme of post-war building, and ought to include firm guarantees that this programme will not be left at the mercy of "economy" campaigners so as to inflict intolerable hardship both on those in the industry who have equipped themselves to carry it through in good faith and on the public, which wants the goods the industry will be ready to provide. Has the Government really still no notion of how many houses, schools, etc., it proposes to get built as part of its reconstruction programme? If not, what steps is it taking towards making up its mind? The matter is vital, both for its own sake and because the Government has told us that it cannot commit itself to the Beveridge Report until it knows how much it will need to spend on such things as housing. Will it now say that it cannot make up its mind about building until it knows what it will have to find for Social Security?

*Ministry of Works and Planning. Report on Training for the Building Industry. *H.M.S.O.* 1s.

†Training for the Building Industry. Cmd. 6428. *H.M.S.O.* 1d.

A LONDON DIARY

A GIANT, with one foot on Hampstead Heath and another on Primrose Hill, was tearing calico from the ground outside my window up to the stars round his head. That was how the raid sounded. It was much more alarming than a mere shower of bombs; and the fact that a lot of heavy metal was likely to come down from our own defences made the streets and upper floors of houses less attractive than in raids when we were less obtrusively defended. Hence I was not surprised to hear of a certain amount of pushing outside shelters, and I could not help recalling warnings about danger to the civilian public when the new air defences were debated last year in the House of Commons. It may be remembered that Lord Cherwell and the Prime Minister were regarded as responsible for a decision that seems not to have been generally endorsed by the Government's scientific advisers. In any case the view that our defences alarmed the public which is, goodness knows, usually phlegmatic about bombs, made it essential, I should have said, to hold a public inquiry into the new facts that caused the death of 180 people in a single shelter. Better entrance arrangements, better light on the stairs, more attention at the shelters by air wardens—these and other points occur to everyone, but it seems to me that there must have been a new psychological cause. And from the talk I hear in buses and shops on the subject, an authoritative statement, based on the inquiry that I gather is now to take place, will be an important factor in preventing the recurrence of such a catastrophe.

* * *

The shadow of the Whitsun Conference is felt over Labour politics. The Communists are doing a tremendous drive for affiliation and it is admitted that the vote is likely to be close. The big miners' vote and the engineering vote will both come down in favour of affiliation. The Transport Workers and the Municipal and General Workers look like being on the other side. On the analogy of last year's *Daily Worker* decision, the Communist Party might possibly pull off affiliation. What would happen? A split in the Labour and in the Trade Union movement would seem probable.

There is a lot to be said for Communist affiliation, but it is certainly not a movement for "unity." As a member of the Executive said to me the other day, "Pollitt and his friends now promise to abide by Party decisions and work loyally with Labour Party colleagues if affiliation is accepted. But what is to stop the Party line changing one night and all of us Labour leaders again becoming Social Fascists?"

* * *

Another issue that may arise in some form is the increasing importance of Catholic organisation particularly within the Trade Union movement. Personally I think that Labour leaders have long been thoroughly cowardly about the Catholic vote. It was one of the many excuses for inertia amongst leaders during the Spanish war. But anyone, who had the courage bluntly to explain to a Catholic Socialist audience that on this issue the Catholic Church was the centre of reaction, was apt to be surprised by the number who followed their Socialism even against their priest. Would the same hold now on internal issues, such as education? Has the attempt been boldly made? It is so much easier for an M.P. or Trade Union leader just to give in on the ground that priests are influential and the Catholic vote important. Catholic influence, I think, is now growing; I even hear chatter about separate Catholic Unions. I do not expect to see that happen but the growth and strength of Catholic cells within the Unions is without doubt.

* * *

I hear from visitors recently back from the United States that the violence of Rickenbacker's propaganda is likely to defeat itself. I hope it works out like that. He is obviously the latest choice for the kind of Republican leader who is a Fascist in all but name. He has a number of qualifications for the position. Like Lindbergh, who was also worshipped as a hero before he turned out to be a good friend of Hitler, Rickenbacker has all the glamour of the Air Ace who survived the last war, and after a tough career at the head of American Eastern Airways, he started flying in this war too. He got lost in the Pacific and was naturally more of a hero than ever when he was picked up after twenty-one days in a rubber boat. Now he has just completed a speaking tour covering the entire country. The chief ingredient in his brew would appear to be a violent and even hysterical attack on Labour, to which anti-Semitism, anti-colour, and anti-all-foreigner can be added to taste.

* * *

After the last war administrative reforms of the greatest importance were carried through in British prisons as the result of the revelations of educated prisoners, first suffragettes, and then conscientious objectors. With this in mind a small pamphlet called *Prison Medical Service* is well worth study. The author, Roger Page, was imprisoned as a conscientious objector; he says that Mr. Morrison dismissed a memorandum on the subject as unfair and inaccurate. But in such matters the Home Secretary is almost compelled to accept the verdict of the officials concerned; he cannot personally see the medical examination of prisoners. The charges brought fall into two classes, of perfunctory and inadequate medical attention, including an entirely nominal examination even for vermin, on entry and departure; and bad and unhealthy sanitary arrangements. The Prison Medical Reform Council, which publishes this pamphlet, certainly makes very moderate demands for a medical charter, including the carrying out of the proper routine examinations, adequate food, dental and optical treatment, trained hospital staffs, access to a lavatory at least once in ten hours.

* * *

"Translation and the spirit of another language," writes an English friend who knows German well, "can produce some subtle and unexpected effects upon the stage. I saw a German version of *Thunder Rock* the other evening brilliantly acted by a company of refugees at the Austrian Centre (69 Eton Avenue), near Swiss Cottage. Among the ghosts it was chiefly the Viennese doctor who gained. Speaking in German he was even more convincing as the gentle and introverted scientist than he could ever have been in English. The language he used was formed to express that state of mind. On the other hand, the thwarted feminist, who was in fact making her way to Salt Lake City, became more fantastic and improbable when she talked German than I had thought her when she spoke the tongue of Victorian England. I remember noticing once before how the genius of a language can transform even the most familiar lines. I was listening to Hamlet, in Schlegel's nearly perfect translation, in the Catholic atmosphere of Vienna. 'Get thee to a nunnery' lost all the roughness it commonly has when a Protestant actor speaks it. It became almost a verbal caress. A nunnery for Catholic German ears is an ideal refuge of happiness and peace. Some few cuts in the first act of *Thunder Rock* improved the play, and caused the second act to stand out even more prominently as the masterpiece it is. I gather that this vital and enterprising company of players may soon produce some recent German work on its modest little stage."

* * *

A correspondent relates the following recent incident: "A friend of mine was in the West End after dinner the other day looking for a taxi to take her and her friend home, when they saw in front of them two brass hats and a mink coat also looking for a taxi. When a taxi finally appeared the mink coat and the brass hats who were in front advanced towards it, but the driver poked his head out of the window and said to the nearest brass hat, 'No, give us Beveridge first.' He then motioned my friend, who was more quietly dressed into the taxi and during the subsequent journey regaled her and her friend with stories of people who had standing orders for taxis to take them to work every morning which they then charged to 'expenses.'"

* * *

I take the following superb illustration of This Germany from a German broadcast to Germans in France on March 5th:

> "Germans of all classes will send gifts to the Führer for his birthday. Only new or virtually unused articles are to be given. All Germans are to contribute cheerfully. There is all the difference in the world in doing one's duty punctiliously and correctly and doing the job enthusiastically and with one's whole heart. We Germans must remember this when on March 6th and 7th there are collecting boxes in the streets of the Reich.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to X. Y.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

A constable said that on being told that his car had been immobilised by the police and pushed to the other side of the road, Major Braithwaite exclaimed: "I have never heard such a thing in my life. I will see Herbert Morrison in the morning. This is a piece of damned impertinence. I will take a taxi and leave the car there, and they can deliver it in the station yard at the House of Commons in the morning."—Report in *Manchester Guardian*.

When I read those wonderful passages from the Bible in the Lessons each Sunday I never come across instructions from Christ about such things as obsess the Archbishop, like the need for social control over land and water, the nationalisation of the banks, etc.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph*.

Hilda Freeman, soprano, sang two songs, accompanied by Phyllis Coppin, but in an endeavour, as it seemed, to put the utmost feeling into a high note, she failed to produce it at all, thereby spoiling a song which was otherwise charmingly sung.—*Romford Times*.

I had a dinner which I shall remember as one of the outstanding memories of the war, and I finished up with an excellent liqueur.—*Autocar*.

Carmarthen County Council opened by singing the Welsh National Anthem—it being St. David's Day—then raised the rates 11d.—*News Chronicle*.

No applications have been received for a cleaner at £20 a year for Fodderty School, Strathpeffer, and the headmaster told Dingwall School Management Committee yesterday that he sincerely hoped no one was poor enough to apply for the job at that rate of pay.

"Make the pay reasonably attractive and there will be no scarcity of applicants," he added.

The chairman, the Rev. Norman Campbell, said, "That is not very patriotic."—*Bulletin and Scots Pictorial*.

Sir John Mellor, M.P., is quite right. In future if any of the livings of which I am the patron should become vacant, I shall make sure of the political views of applicants before nominating anyone, which I have never done in the past.—Letter in *Daily Telegraph*.

USUAL CHANNELS

[BY A TEMPORARY CIVIL SERVANT]

FOR the official and semi-official people whose office had been moved into the district from London, it was a billeting area. Local householders were required by law to give them bed, breakfast and lunch or supper, at a guinea a week per head. In my case, as in some others, the guinea would be deducted from salary "at source," and the billetor would collect it from the local post office, after filling up (of course) a form. But I thought twenty-one shillings a week was poor payment for a bedroom and two meals a day provided willy-nilly, and anyhow I wanted to live with my wife, who was not "compulsorily billetable." I said so to the Billeting Officer when I had found half a furnished house.

"In that case," said the B.O., evidently disliking the case, "you will be billeted on your wife."

"What exactly does that mean?"

"Your wife will have to fill up a billetor's form and get her guinea from the post office each week."

"I see. My office deducts a guinea from my salary and passes it on to the Ministry of Health. The Health Ministry passes it on to the Postmaster-General. The P.M.G.'s office passes it on to the local post office here. The local P.O. passes it on to my wife, when she has trudged to get it. A bit like the half-crown that A borrows from the college servant in *Charlie's Aunt* so that Z, eventually, may tip the college servant with it. Wouldn't it be simpler and cheaper if I myself handed the guinea to my wife?"

"No, you can't do that. It must go through the usual channels."

I don't know whether the Billeting Officer was mis- or rightly interpreting the rules, but *there* was the official mind at work on them. And it was only a beginning of the fun.

The office, in a large town, was sparsely furnished. I was a new "extra," and I needed a desk or writing-table and a chair. The office boy could have got them second-hand at a shop round the corner (I had seen just the thing in its window), and brought them on a hand barrow—the work of half an hour. That, I was told, would be "quite out of hand." Application must be made, on a form, to the local representatives of the Office of Works. They forwarded the indent to London on another form. From there it went to the factory or warehouse of a somewhat expensive firm on the outskirts of London. The firm made two bulky packages of a brand new desk and a brand new chair, and sent them up to London. Then, at a time when everyone was urged to leave all possible space on the railways to essential munitions, the desk and chair made the 100-mile journey from London by train. They

arrived about six weeks after they were ordered.

When the office was first opened its inexperienced staff indented to the Stationery Office for 600 envelopes. It received 25,000. It needed and used them all in the next eighteen months; but we wondered naively what was the use of the indent system of checks if it could be treated like that.

All the same, we were sent economy labels, too, in due time. But for precious months their use was restricted by official order, from H.Q. in London, to the minor fraction of our correspondence that passed within our own Government Department or to other Government Departments. At least, I *think* we were allowed to use them on envelopes to other Departments, but I'm not sure.

At the climax, almost, of the paper shortage, we needed a few more copies of a regulation book of regulation forms. I mean, the rules said we needed them. To be quite on the safe side, especially after the envelope experience, we indented for six of the books. We were sent seventy-two.

Our biggest room, with the most windows, was the only room in the office that had no black-out arrangement. When winter loomed ahead we thought we ought to do something about it. Some of us had wives willing and competent to get the black-out material and make curtains if the cost were chargeable to the Department's account. Once again "that would be quite out of hand." It wasn't even possible for the Office of Works to measure the windows and state the dimensions in its circular to potential tenderers (or whatever this stage of the procedure might be). Each firm must send a man, and invariably sent two men, to take its own specifications. By the time the tenders had been completed, submitted, deliberated and adjudicated on, and the curtains were up, part of our staff had had to lose about an hour and a half's work every day for some weeks, because their room could not be used after black-out time.

A colleague was single-handed in the particular, specialised job he had to do. The air-raid season gave him more work than any one man could have managed thoroughly. He asked for an assistant, and got an official raspberry instead. The blitz petered out, and for three months he had an average of about one hour's cumulative work a day. He then received word that he was to be transferred elsewhere, and replaced by four executives with seven or eight clerical and other assistants. When the whole of this staff had been in action for three weeks, the total amount of work it had had to do was at last equal to a single day's labour by my colleague at the height of the blitz. The staff was later reduced to two or three, but still bored.

For reasons of departmental routine this new unit's equipment from the Office of Works and Stationery Office came to me. One of its consignments was out of the ordinary because it measured only about eight inches by two. An economy label bound a large, much-folded envelope of first-rate paper. Inside this was a piece of thin, off-white cardboard, which unfolded to sixteen inches by twelve. Inside that was an indent form, bearing extensive printed instructions, columns filled in and to be filled, dotted lines to be signed on and dated by way of receipt. They related to the "enclosed materials." These were two small pieces of india-rubber. The office boy could have got them for threepence or fourpence the pair at a shop 200 yards away.

INNS

THERE was an interesting paragraph in the newspapers the other day about the drift back from Dagenham to the East End of London. One reason of the drift-back, according to Dr. J. J. Mallon, Warden of Toynbee Hall, was the absence of public-houses in new housing estates such as Dagenham.

Good men of reforming tendencies have, unfortunately, in the last two or three generations been subject to the curious illusion that a country, city, town, village or housing estate would approximate more closely to perfection if it contained no public-houses. They have imagined the public-house as a kind of dragon with enormous black wings that with their shadow prevented decent human beings from living in perpetual sunshine. In modern times, even reformers who would not have dreamed of giving a dinner party without providing wine and brandy for their guests, had an uneasy feeling that drink was not good for anybody else, especially the working classes. This uneasy feeling ultimately took shape in the great experiment of prohibition in America. Now, we were told, gaols would be empty, wives—and husbands—would no longer be beaten, and the money spent in saloons would be devoted to feeding, clothing and educating the young.

I confess, as half a teetotaller in spirit, I sympathised with some of these hopes. Everybody knew of tragedies associated with drink that made one wonder whether the world would not be a happier place if it were as free from the love of strong liquor as the ancient philosophers wished it to be from the love of gold. In practice, however, the restrictions on drinking turned out to be an incitement, not to abstinence, but to more and more insobriety. Deprived of the right to drink socially in their accustomed haunts, the old and the young resorted more and more to illegal speakeasies and bottles in the bedroom. It became obvious that, at the present stage of evolution, drinking in some form or other was one of the necessary relaxations of civilised man. And, whatever may be argued on the other side, every one who had ever spent much time in saloons and public-houses knew that the vast majority of human beings drink moderately. The ordinary human being has always been either too cautious or too poor to indulge to any great extent in the pleasures of excess. No public-house that I have ever known was frequented mainly by drunkards.

I myself became accustomed to public-houses at an early age. There was a public-house at the side of the road between my preparatory school and my home, and, as it sold not only liquor but such luxuries as liquorice laces and cinnamon cigarettes, I used often to drop into it when I had a penny to squander. The cinnamon cigarettes—which, I am sure, were less harmful to the pharynx than the modern cigarettes made of so-called tobacco—enabled one to enjoy not only a sweet flavour, but a sense of premature manhood. Also, when we were in the country and used to drive to church, we always put the horse up in the yard of a public-house—Mooney's, to be exact, within a minute's walk of the Bann at Coleraine.

In spite of this early introduction to the public-house atmosphere, however, I had an irrational feeling that men who went into public-houses in my native city were in some way guilty of sin. There were so many back doors to public-houses in those days that even half the men who frequented them must have done so with a feeling of guilt. Other public-houses were situated down long passages known as "entries" between one street and another, and here, too, nominal teetotallers escaped observation as they turned out of the main street on their guilty errands. I had a card in my bedroom, with an angel set against a blue background on it, confirming my position as a member of the Band of Hope, and I always applauded at Band of Hope concerts when small boys and girls sang songs against drink, maintaining that "It biteth like a serpent; it stingeth like an adder," or the other way round; so that naturally when I saw a man walking out of the door of a public-house I felt that he was no better than he should be, and that he was probably under the influence.

As a result I do not suppose that I had ever a drink in a public-house till my fairly late teens. And that was shandy-gaff. Not knowing how weak it was I drank it in a certain spirit of recklessness. From that I proceeded to a small claret hot—then a favourite drink for semi-teetotallers in public-houses. It may have been, and probably was, pretty vile stuff; but it was vintage claret to me. Then came bottled stout—an admirable drink, if there were not so much of it in a bottle. And finally—what then seemed the best of all drinks—a small whisky hot, with a lump of sugar and a slice of lemon in it, and a glass muddler to crush the sugar and to squeeze the juice out of the lemon—a drink that fortunately disappeared in most public-houses about the beginning of the last war.

I doubt, however, whether the only attraction of the public-houses was the drink they served. Most of us, I am sure, went there—at first, at least—also for company. Our indifference to drinking for drinking's sake was apparent in our contempt for the man who drank alone: we called him a "dumb boozer." More and more, however, we became conscious of the inadequacy of the reading room in the Free Library as a meeting place for ardent spirits. There was an atmosphere of warmth, both material and spiritual, in a public-house in which the rigour of the conventional world was relaxed and conversation in one of the last fortresses of Calvinism became as free and easy as in the Latin Quarter of Paris.

I have no doubt the fugitives from Dagenham who are making their way back to the East End of London in search of public-houses have experienced the same sense of release in their old haunts. The ordinary man—in the temperate zone, at heart—needs both a private house and a public-house for his full development—a private house in which he can be his best self and a public-house in which he can take a holiday as his second-best self. The Englishman's love of his home—his castle, as it is called—is famous throughout the world; but how much more ardently he loves it because he is occasionally able to escape from it into a public-house and to go back to the bosom of his family with his affections reinvigorated!

The truth is, everybody is the better for a change from his home life, and the only means by which ordinary human beings can achieve this in a social sense is by going to church or by making an occasional call at the local public-house. The disappearance of churches and public-houses would mean the disintegration of social life in every village in England. It is not to be wondered at that in so many villages and small towns there is a public-house in close proximity to the church spire. There the communal life bubbles and brims over. Men become more or less brothers. There are no comparable centres for news of neighbours. A man might live in a village for a year and, if he never went to church or into a public-house, he would know almost nothing of it at the end. Mr. Quentin Reynolds says in one of his books that a foreigner in England will never get to know the English people unless he goes into public-houses. This is probably an exaggeration, for a man of genius might get to know England even without going to the Café Royal.

The real defence of the public-house is that for many people in search of a place to sit down and talk to other people for an hour or so, there is no other place to go. To a lonely man the cinema is unsocial, and the teashop depressing; but to enter a public-house—boring though some public-houses are—is to slip into a world of ease and company such as exists nowhere else. The men of Dagenham appear to feel this. They know as well as anybody else that there's no place like home, but they also know that the ideal home is situated within walking distance of a public-house. If I were giving advice to a young man, I would half urge him to be a teetotaller and a non-smoker; but at the same time I would suggest to him not to be too severe on the weaker brethren who need all kinds of odd symbols of sociability to keep them moderately good citizens. Beer may not be best, but the want of it seems to have cast a blight on Dagenham. And, after all, modern beer is little more than a symbol. What would a pint of "mild" taste like except dishwater if it were poured down the rural and metropolitan throats anywhere but in a public-house?

Y. Y.

THE MOVIES

"The Magnificent Ambersons," at the Astoria
"Desert Victory," at the Tivoli
"Operational Height," at the Marble Arch

The bomb damage at Acton can be described without giving away vital secrets. Orson Welles' second film *The Magnificent Ambersons*, showing now at the Dominion, Acton, and next week at the Astoria, is in fact less explosive than his first, though how far this is due to our own advanced education it would be hard to say. The vistas are less terrifying, human beings are no longer treated as sky-scrapers, a time-sequence is preserved, and the mystery of Rosebuds and snowstorms has been dispensed with. All the clues (or nearly all) in *The Magnificent Ambersons* can be seized at a first performance, and one will go back chiefly to renew a lavish experience and to distinguish detail that has crowded on the eye and ear. The beginning especially, with a narrator impressing upon us the delights and oddities of a period, needs some clearing, which perhaps a knowledge of later developments will provide. Welles, like a conjuror, has to instruct his audience and make a number of passes before the atmosphere is right for beginning. I found this initial sparring and enlightenment rather slow despite fascination, but once it is over and the characters detach themselves from the crowd the rest is superb. If there are fewer tricks than in *Citizen Kane*, the magic is more assured. So much of this magic is due to a perfect combination of voices, background, movement and changes of light and shade that one can give very little idea of *The Magnificent Ambersons* by dwelling on its theme. A theme is what you make of it, and Booth Tarkington's novel of family grandeur and an arrogant son sacrificing his mother to pride of name becomes on the screen pure Welles. What could be more commonplace, apparently, than the clash between obsessed aristocrat and commercial outsider, the change-over from family estates to business enterprise? Yet this struggle provides a situation that is elaborated with wonderful realism and insight, so that even the *piano* ending, with loss of fortune, an accident and a change of heart, seems logically and emotionally sufficient. Or take the obvious period contrasts: the automobile making its first inroad into a horse-loving community. The threat, at first comical, to old ways and elegance is transformed by Welles into one of the loveliest sequences in the film: a snow scene in which the chugging new monster and the jingle of sleigh-bells play a counterpoint that one can't forget. From *Citizen Kane* I carried away the memory of particular shots; it had a staccato brilliance; the style of *The Magnificent Ambersons* is in its sequences, which gather intensity or flow into patterns with an ease which obliterates the transition from shot to shot. The snow scene, the leave-taking after the ball, two people walking in shadow along a pavement and emerging in harsh sunlight to say good-bye: these are more than lyrical moments, because the psychological realism of the characters colours each deeply, but it is essentially a triumph of that impressionism which, except for Clair and a few others, has almost disappeared from films with the introduction of the sound-track. Welles' use of sound in *The Magnificent Ambersons* is less revolutionary and shocking than before. People talk together or across distances, talk flares up and gutters away inaudibly; such realism would perhaps strike anyone who had never seen a Welles film, but it is not obtrusive. *The Magnificent Ambersons* captures by its photography, which is endlessly fresh and masterly in its appeal. For that reason, after Welles himself, we should perhaps be most grateful to Stanley Cortez, his photographic director. The acting is on the *Kane* level; Agnes Moorhead especially gives a remarkably fine performance.

Orson Welles leaves me no space for *Desert Victory*, one of the best documentaries the war has produced. It is more highly finished, but for some reason a shade less impressive than the films of Stalingrad and Leningrad. However, the R.A.F. and Army Film Units must be congratulated on a fine job, which incidentally conveys a remarkably clear idea of the tactics in Montgomery's campaign. *Operational Height* produced by the R.A.F. Film Unit, gives an agreeable picture of the routine, dangers and alleviations of life on a balloon drifter in the Channel.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Leicester Gallery

Here is an exhibition by one of the most interesting of our younger men. During the last ten years or so Kenneth Martin has been feeling his way towards the apprehension of form. Taste and a sense of paint he displayed from the first; such pictures as *Fruit* and *The Bed* show that he has more serious gifts and that he means to employ them. Both reveal a struggle to create forms of weight and substance and situate them in three dimensional space: also, both are largely successful. It may be the exigencies of war that have caused him of late to work in pastel rather than paint. He uses the medium in a personal way, seeking to create not butterfly-wing-like effects so much as chalk drawings at once rich and delicate. A hundred years hence historians will very possibly describe Kenneth Martin as a master of the Euston Road school; on which presumably his bones will turn in their grave. At the same gallery, in the Reynolds room, is a collection of paintings by Stephen Bone; in the front room are a number of drawings by Roger Pettiward (Paul Crum). Of these a few are funny enough to make one laugh without half of the text.

RELIEF PRIORITY

[*The official British attitude towards sending food supplies into the unoccupied countries remains unchanged.*—Report in Manchester Guardian.]

IF no relief may pass through our blockade
To Allied lands where children starve and die,
If no exception can for these be made,
If their last hope of rescue we deny
For fear provision for their need conveyed
Might give assistance to the enemy,
If our self-preservation must dictate
We leave a generation to its fate,

If in this cause we cannot now relent
Lest it should mean our adversary's gain,
How then did we the selfsame risk prevent
When shipments were allowed to ports of Spain,
Or when from Africa the convoys went
Which might the Axis war machine sustain,
And how then did we guard against the chance
The foe might be relieved through Vichy France?

If it were madness now, how was it wise,
Relaxing our restrictions, to permit
A flow of war material and supplies
For neutral Italy's sole benefit,
And what precautions did we then devise
That Germany should make no use of it?
How could it be we were less fearful then,
The foe being stronger both in arms and men?

If our embargo may be raised no more,
If they must hungry go who might be fed,
Victims and sacrifices in our war,
So many doomed to die, so many dead,
However loudly we their fate deplore,
Let us consider well, lest it be said
Our words ring false, our action ever tends
Rather to buy our foes than save our friends.

SAGITTARIUS.

Correspondence

INDIA

SIR,—Now that Mr. Gandhi's fast is over, can we get the controversy on to an adult basis, and away from the eternal film star discussion of Gandhi and Jinnah? There are other Indians, even in India, and none who matter will serve us.

Gandhi's action dramatised an almost universal despair, which has now invaded even the Central Government. India has what is officially styled a food shortage. This is how the Commerce Member spoke of his task of meeting it (Bombay, December 11): "You could not lean as much on this Government as on a National Government and you could not naturally expect from me as a Member of the present Government as much as from a Member of a National Government. Still, whatever opportunities I get I shall do my best." The situation is frozen and every effort to break it up is blocked. In the fourth year of war we must carry on with the same regime and lukewarm and apologetic support by such statesmen as I have quoted.

We are in a spin of contradictory dialectics. We fight for democracy. But in India democracy is unthinkable, for a majority unfortunately happen to be Hindus and show no signs of changing their religion, so democracy would mean "Hindu domination." The dominators, however, would be swiftly cleaned up by the Moslems, so democracy would "depend on British bayonets." Indians who refuse to accept Government posts (they include three Privy Councillors) do not matter. Those who accept do—until they resign, when their resignation was always a foregone conclusion and does not matter. Every discussion runs up abruptly into the statement that "India has a vital part to play in the United Nations' strategy." This is true—but to foreclose all other considerations by that of our own necessities is morally indefensible.

Sapru long ago called the deadlock "the bankruptcy of statesmanship of both sides." Some of us who are friends of Congress leaders agree. But, since we have no way of talking frankly to our friends, if we say this we are trapped and an isolated sentence is quoted as the whole of what we think and we are made to appear to be kicking our friends when they are down. The finest thing in the Cripps proposals was the announcement that while all groups would be heard none would be allowed to impose a veto. Since then, no one does anything but impose vetoes; and there is no end in sight.

This business has shot our ethics and propaganda to pieces. One Indian village, the world has been told, has had a large proportion of its inhabitants sentenced to anything from flogging up to death. The revising judge who confirmed 14 out of 20 death sentences remarked that the trial "shed a strange light on the mentality of the people," who seemed united "in a conspiracy of silence." If the people of a Czech or Polish village hung back from giving evidence which might send their neighbours to the gallows, should we say this? We have the fairest cause Time has ever known and the gallantry of those who are serving is beyond anything we deserve, but we somehow manage to make our cause look ignoble. What about the unprecedented black-out of Indian news? Ask the next dozen people you meet how much they are told of India: how much of this little they believe; and if they think this censorship is for military reasons. India is the weakest part of our war effort morally; I believe it is militarily also.

Oxford. EDWARD THOMPSON.

THE HIGHLANDS SCHEME

SIR,—For sheer misrepresentation your paragraph on the Hydro-Electric Development (Scotland) Bill would be hard to beat. Your readers who may not have followed the debate must have wondered by what magic the Secretary of State for Scotland succeeded in getting the measure a Second Reading (without a division) if it were the sort of Bill which your caricature represents it to be. The contemptible device of summarising not the Bill but matters which you allege are "involved" is worthy of the cheapest type of journalism. In this supposed summary, for example, it is stated the Bill means the denial of electricity to the Highlanders. This is as near to a deliberate untruth as any statement on the Bill could possibly be. The Secretary of State was careful to show that electricity would be made available to the Highlanders under the provisions of the Bill which give express priority to the local requirements of ordinary consumers and authorised undertakers. Mr. Johnston also cited the concrete example of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright which has provided 77 per cent. of the premises in villages, hamlets and small communities in one county alone with electricity supply. Again, your readers are informed that the destruction of the glens is involved. Mr. Johnston showed that an Amenity Committee was to be formed which would be consulted before any scheme was put into operation, and, if the Committee did not approve, the Secretary of State could refuse to confirm the scheme. Further, that one of the main purposes of referring schemes to Parliament was to ensure that amenities would be safeguarded. This latter measure, however, is passed over as "a safe device used for legislation for subject races."

You speak of "the interested bodies, such as the Saltire Society and the Scottish Reconstruction Committee" having urged the Government "to

embody electric development in a general scheme for the regeneration of the Highlands," and ignore the many bodies who are not only interested but *affected* by the Hydro-Electric Development proposals and who have expressed their support of Mr. Johnston's Bill. Some of these were enumerated by Mr. Malcolm MacMillan in the course of the debate; Inverness Town and County Councils, "all the representative Highland and Islands bodies," and "the vast majority of the people of the North." To these might be added the Scottish Council of Industry which, at a meeting attended by Lochiel, the Provost of Inverness, and the County Clerk of Inverness-shire, among others, expressed unanimous approval of the Bill; and the Highland newspapers which have urged that it would be a tragedy if anything were to happen to prevent the passage of the Bill. Your readers can judge for themselves, against this body of support, the strength of any alleged opposition.

You claim a desire to see a general scheme for Highland regeneration, but you should be aware that the whole field of Scottish life and affairs is at present being surveyed by a series of expert investigating bodies on fishing, housing, education, land settlement, etc., and that their findings will be submitted, like that of the Cooper Committee, to the Council of State for consideration and co-ordination in a wide scheme of Scottish post-war development.

House of Commons. GEO. MATHERS

[Hoots, mon! What ails you? Half Scot ourselves, we expect the misrepresentation to come from the Sassenachs. We said that the export of electricity was not provided for in the Bill, but was involved in it. This was based upon Mr. Johnston's statement that the major conclusions of the Cooper Report were accepted, and that domestic consumers in the Highlands would not in the near future have electricity. The existing undertakers supply electricity in the country at 8*d.* a unit, which none but the rich can afford. Mr. Johnston's scheme was postulated upon export, which means damming Glen Affric. The method of laying an order in Council upon the table of the House is, in fact, the method used for Colonial legislation, and bears no resemblance to the democratic procedure of submitting a Bill for debate and approval. We wrote, and we trust, with justice, that the Bill will be so amended that it can be used to provide electricity for the Highlands without schemes which destroy national beauty.—ED., N.S. & N.]

MOSCOW AND POLAND

SIR,—Your correspondent in Moscow attacks "certain Polish writers in London" on the basis of the accusations levelled at them by M. Korneichuk. "While the Polish people," he writes, "are suffering all the horrors of German occupation, certain Polish writers in London even express the view that there is really no hurry about their liberation because such a quick liberation could come only as the result of a Russian victory . . . Therefore, not for technical reasons, but for political reasons, certain London Poles were against the opening of a Second Front."

May I be permitted to state, as one of those "Polish writers in London" that this accusation is completely unfounded? No Polish writer has, to my best knowledge, expressed such a view. M. Korneichuk in his article published by the *Radyanska Ukraina* and reprinted by *Pravda* as well as by the London *Soviet War News*, has attacked the London paper *Polska Walczaca* (Fighting Poland) for an alleged "sabotage" of the Second Front idea. May I, as the author of the weekly military and political reviews in that paper, be allowed to state that his whole accusation is freely invented? In the spring and in summer last year when the problem of the opening of the Second Front has been discussed in this country, I have been pointing out repeatedly that the Allied armies are not yet prepared for that task and that they should first of all clear the enemy out of Africa. I have been the exponent of the view that the occupation of the whole African coast is essential for any invasion of Europe. At the same time when many papers in this country expressed in summer last year the gravest concern about Russia's military position, I have pointed out repeatedly that Russia will start a tremendous offensive action some time in winter and that her military strength is very considerable.

These are the facts. I hardly can see how a writer can be condemned for expressing views whose soundness has been confirmed by the course of events.

London, W.1. DR. Z. GRABOWSKI

SUNDAY THEATRES

SIR,—When, about thirteen years ago, Equity arose from the ashes of the Actors' Association (whose death was caused only because it attempted to defend trade union rights too robustly) it had a very uncertain start. Managers frowned upon it and actors hesitated to enrol, the result being that after its first year or two of life it could muster less than 200 fully paid-up members. Mr. Alfred Wall, who was then actively engaged in organising Equity, succeeded in buying off the hostility of managers by supporting their efforts in favour of Sunday opening, and shortly afterwards a Bill was debated in Parliament to which Sir Alfred Butt moved an amendment on behalf of theatre managers' organisations and Equity demanding the inclusion of theatres in the Sunday Opening Bill. This was in 1931. The agitation on the managers' part for Sunday opening was only a first step to the real objective, which was a seven-day week.

The real economic fight is a question of working hours in competition with the cinemas. This was clearly exposed on the committee stage of the Bill. So long as commercialism in the theatre feels and fears the relentless mechanical competition of the cinemas whose reel-handles turn from noon to midnight on six days a week and for six hours or so on Sundays (I speak of normal peace times) pressure will be constant for Sunday opening because, once the bastion of Sunday is stormed, a seven-day week will sooner or later be inevitable. Mr. Arundell speaks with contempt of those who erect a "bogy" of a seven-day week, and appeals to the law as if it were unalterable. Does he not know that the law is merely a legal record of the changing opinions of citizens? We are told that Sunday opening is only a wartime measure. Who is so simple as to believe that, once it is conceded, it can ever be regained?

Actors who oppose Sunday opening are perfectly willing to work on Sundays for the benefit of the Services and war workers during the war on a rota basis *provided* commercialism is cut right out; but they will strenuously oppose all attempts to make Sunday work a condition of employment.

St. James's Theatre, S.W.1. ROBERT YOUNG

COMMON WEALTH

SIR,—The success of Common Wealth candidates at recent by-elections, the reasons for which were, I believe, correctly analysed by your correspondent Mr. Tom Sargant, has produced some odd reactions in the Communist camp. In a lively newsletter, which specialises in sinister revelations—and is now appropriately printed on yellow paper—I was recently astonished to read that a Common Wealth supporter, who is intimately known to me and on whose political and personal integrity I would stake my life, was secretly a Fascist or at least had "Fascist connections"! A further indictment of the Common Wealth movement, as a whole, is based on the charge, which has no foundation in fact, that it appeals only to the anti-Communist and anti-Trade Unionist middle and lower-middle classes. This flourishing of the moth-eaten "middle-class" bogy seems to be a favourite device of professional "proletarians," particularly those who have received a sound working-class education of the kind provided by Eton and Oxford. It is about as silly as the "Bolshevik" bogey of which it is the counterpart. No one attacks the Communist Party merely on the ground that a number of "aristocrats" are known to have joined it.

In the England of to-day it is precisely "middle-class" professional people—doctors, architects, clergymen, scientists, schoolmasters, musicians, writers and artists—who are most accustomed to work for higher motives than those of personal gain and are therefore

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PEARL S. BUCK
Essays by a Nobel prize winner on Asia and its relations to the democratic principles actuating the Western powers among the United Nations. 4/6
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most ready to welcome a new economic system from which profit-seeking has been eliminated. Such men and women are pioneers of the "class-less society" which it is the aim of all who have a sense of social justice to create.

Sectional dictatorship, whether of a doctrinaire group of self-styled "workers," or of bankers and industrialists, is contrary to that conception of a true democracy which so many of us are now striving to make a reality. Under war conditions we are all, presumably, "workers" of one kind or another. The question we have to decide, when the war is over, is whether we shall work for private gain or for the common good. Common Wealth, by taking us "half way to Moscow" without sacrificing any of our democratic ideals and traditions, seems to me to be Fascism's most uncompromising and formidable foe. Its simple, inspiring and constructive programme, which makes new converts every day, may yet prove to be our way of salvation from the scourge which threatens us. Already it has given a new vitality to Gladstone's famous slogan: "Nothing that is morally wrong can ever be politically right." DOUGLAS GOLDRING

JENNIE LEE AND THE I.L.P.

SIR,—R. St. John Reade is fully entitled to his views about Jennie Lee and the I.L.P., but he should not be allowed to mislead the readers of your paper. He says that Jennie Lee conducted "the finest educational campaign for Socialism which Bristol has had for many years." May I, as one who was in the constituency during the last week of the by-election, inform your readers that Jennie Lee's election address did not contain a single reference to Socialism, and could be accepted by any Liberal, which fact explains why she was supported by local Liberals and by Vernon Bartlett, Clement Davies, Tom Horrabin and Edgar Granville. It would appear that it is Reade, not Fenner Brockway, who is "a man ignorant of the facts or blinded by narrow political prejudice."

WALTER PADLEY

ANTI-SEMITISM

From numbers of letters on this subject we print the following extracts.—ED. "*N.S. & N.*"

From A. Schoyer, Chairman, Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain.

Mrs. Eugenie Fordham's letter has been read with great concern by many refugees, and our Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain, representing the interests of Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria, feels bound to reply to it. We have always appreciated your very fair and understanding attitude towards the cause of the refugees, and we do not want to appear over-sensitive to criticism. In times like these, however, when, as you rightly point out in your own comment, Xenophobia is apt to spread, we have to be most careful to watch every symptom which may lead to ill-feeling against any part of the population. It may not be so well known that thousands of refugees, men and women alike, are serving in H.M. Forces, that many thousands of them are working in the factories day and night, side by side with their British fellow-workers; that thousands of them such as doctors, scientists and engineers are making their valuable contribution to the war effort—all putting in their best endeavours in order to overcome the common enemy, and willingly making their personal sacrifices. There is too good a reason for them to wish and work for a speedy and victorious end to the war. Nobody will deny that there are outsiders in every group, but must the mistake which has caused such unspeakable harm be repeated, and a whole community be judged according to the few irresponsibles? Refugees ask their British friends to judge each case on its own merits and not to apply the instrument of generalisation, as they know from their past experience the dangerous influence it can have on the uncritical mind. In his *Psychology of Anti-Semitism*, the Rev. A. Cohen, M.A.Ph.D., says: "More commonly the Jewish community as a whole is condemned for the misdeeds of its black sheep. The many innocent are made to bear the odium created by the few guilty. The faults of delinquents are generalised into a characterisation of all." Should this not also apply to the foreign Jew?

From G. A. Prowse.

How widespread anti-Semitism is to-day is not yet fully realised. Time and again I have come across people whose conversation runs something like this: "Of course, I don't dislike Jews, but when I think of X I must admit . . ." Let me stress the fact that as soon as those words are uttered we are up against an anti-Semitic prejudice, however slight, and it is precisely on such a mental attitude that the more virulent forms of Jew-hatred have their foundation. Unfortunately, it is true to say that nearly all of us (non-Jews) have a slight prejudice in this way, and it is up to us to find a means of eradicating it. Obviously it is an educational problem, but there is little evidence that it has been tackled in this way as yet. What can we do about it? First, we must each admit our prejudices and analyse the reasons for them. We shall soon find that most of them are based on tradition and hearsay. Secondly, we must see that the teaching of racial tolerance and a study of the problems that face other nationalities and races play a far more important part in our schools and other educational institutions than hitherto.

I would like to stress that the Jewish problem is only a particular case of race prejudice, although it is by far the worst, having behind it so many years of tradition and misunderstanding. It is not certain that we can say that the colour-bar is entirely absent in this country.

From William W. Simpson, Organising Secretary, Council of Christians and Jews.

It is always easier to leave the responsibility for putting things right with the other person. Not that the leaders of Jewry are indifferent to these matters. As a non-Jew whose privilege it is to be in fairly close contact with some of the heads of the Jewish community I can assure Mrs. Fordham that they are no less disturbed than she herself about this question of "unsocial behaviour." But they labour under two very considerable handicaps. In the first place, it must in all fairness be pointed out that Jewish "black sheep" are no easier to deal with than their opposite numbers in any other section of the community. If they choose to flout whatever moral authority their leaders may possess there is no effective sanction those leaders can apply. Secondly, the leaders of Jewry are helpless in the face of the widespread tendency on the part of the non-Jew to generalise from the shortcomings of a few into a sweeping condemnation of the whole Jewish community. The truth is, surely, that the matter is one for the community as a whole and not for any one section alone. It is high time that Jews and non-Jews got together on these issues, recognising their common responsibility for dealing with any tendency to divide the community into opposing sections at a time when unity of purpose is such a vital factor in our national life.

AN ECHO OF 1931

SIR,—Mr. Attlee was reported on the wireless and in the Sunday newspapers as having said, in connection with the Wings for Victory Campaign, that "by war savings we should also be able to help in the post-war period." The bigger our National Debt after this war, the better!

Mr. Herbert Morrison in the Beveridge debate gave the House of Commons to understand that (post-war) policy must depend on financial considerations. That is what the late Philip Snowden said in 1931!

Yet there is ample evidence that war conditions have stimulated technological progress to such an extent that our physical capacity to produce will be greater after this war than it was in 1939. Why, then, do Labour's leaders play the Tory game by stressing the financial rather than the physical aspect? Can it be that they are deceived by "money cranks" like the present Governor of the Bank of England and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer?

H. NORMAN SMITH
(Prospective Labour Candidate for South Nottingham)

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KEGAN PAUL

BOOKS IN GENERAL

A CLEAR and useful little introduction to Dostoevsky,* only 150 pages long, by Professor Janko Lavrin, has set me reading some of the shorter works of the great mystifier and persecutor of the Western reader. We stand in the sun on the modest contours of the foothills, looking up at the haggard and fog-hung precipices of Mounts Karamazov, Myshkin, Stavrogin and Raskolnikov, rather awed to think we have been up there, shuddering at the memory of it, impelled to go again, but glad of an excuse not to try it this time. We have been so lost on those heights; laughter at the wrong moments was so apt to cap the ecstasy of our expeditions. We would have periods of asking, with Tolstoy and Turgenev, whether our leader need be so shameless; and our Western natures rebelled at the notion of returning with the hangdog air of petty criminals. We conceived society to be our neighbours and their works; not a spawn of souls, half born and without even an hour's civilisation. And then, in the Twenties, too heady a tradition of salvation was hung around those peaks and it was the wrong kind of salvation. The world is not saved by novelists; and the unreason of the psychological mystics of the Twenties seems to us now, I think, a rather shady attempt to get to God by the stage door. One thing scientific culture has done for us is to give us a desire for order and for intellectual propriety, and I hope we are beginning to see again that egging readers on to personal conversion is not one of the functions of the novel. In any case, the kind of salvation which Dostoevsky appeared to urge was not as private as it seemed to his adorers of twenty years ago; he did not offer a personal salvation in the form of a semi-religious psycho-analysis. The people of Dostoevsky's novels are notable not for their isolation but for their gregariousness. The infection is common. They run in crowds. If they plan to suicide or murder they tell everyone. They are missionaries in morbidity, guilt, and confession. Even when alone they are not absolutely alone; they have at least two selves. One hears not the private groan but the public lamentation. I can well imagine that the next time I read the great works of Dostoevsky—and we are growing nearer and nearer to his temper—I shall find he has everything to say to a Europe which is becoming a morass of broken pride, vengeance, humiliation and remorse. As a political journalist he will have a great deal to say about Christianity and Socialism, about Germany and Russia, about the criminality of Europe; as a novelist he will seem to show a profound instinct for the character of groups of people, their ideas and the common hungers that bind them.

The irrational is no longer the novelty it was, and we are consequently less struck by the madness of Dostoevsky than we used to be. A sensationalist he was; but now, whenever I open a novel of his, my first impression is one of realism and sanity. He knows the world from behind the scenes. The accent is decisive. The voice bristles with satire and expands with a capacious humour. Dostoevsky at his best writes like a hunted man who, for the moment, has fooled the bloodhounds and has time to confess and to laugh before the baying drives him on again. He is laughing out of the experience. He is not laughing in order to escape from it. The shorter novels of Dostoevsky—and in shorter works like *The Eternal Husband*, *An Unpleasant Predicament* and *Uncle's Dream*, we see the ground plan of all his greater works—are festive with experience of human society. Dostoevsky could see the terrors of our double natures, the fever in which ghost meets ghost, but he saw the sardonic comedy of this conjunction. It is frightful that we have so many selves and that the unconscious may wreck us; on the other hand there is something bizarre, something comic, something pitiable, in this squabbling assembly that has somehow got into one pair of trousers. Look at *Uncle's Dream* for a moment. It is a farce: a masterful provincial lady in a scandal-mongering clique, attempts to marry off her beautiful daughter to a decrepit prince. One can picture the whole story as a very funny but quite unreal piece of theatre. But even this mechanical piece of fooling lives on several planes. One moment the Prince, with his wig, his false beard and his derelict body, is a horror; the next moment he is ridiculous. Then, suddenly, he appears delightful. We long for him to appear again as we long for Stefan Trofimovitch in *The Possessed*. The Prince even attains a rickety dignity, and from dignity he dwindles to a thing of pity. After all, we say, he did not really lie when he said his proposal was a dream. The conventional comic writer draws his characters to a single pattern of wit or makes the world a convenience for his joke. Dostoevsky does not do this. He is one of the great comic writers because, however satirically he may begin, he always grows into humour, and the humour is not imposed on life but arises out of it. He is aware of the collisions that take place in our natures. Somewhere—I forget where—Dostoevsky said he merely pushed things to extremes where other people went only half way. And yet when we compare Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* with Dostoevsky's *An Unpleasant Predicament*, it is Dickens who seems to be the unreal and exaggerating artist. For Dickens exaggerated in seeing only one side of the subject. (Tony Weller's life is reduced to a reaction to widders, Barkis is merely "willin'," and so on.) Dostoevsky explored the whole of a subject, and the thing that is comic on one page may become tragic on the next. The profoundly humorous writers are humorous because they are responsive to the hopeless uncertainty and uncouth variability of things.

In *An Unpleasant Predicament* we have the simple story of a pompous official who, in an access of philanthropical conceit, goes uninvited to his clerk's wedding celebrations, just to show that all men are brothers and that he is above social prejudice. Far from having a benevolent effect, the visit ends in his total disgrace and almost succeeds in wrecking the marriage. The stages of Ivan Ilyitch's downfall until he is carried dead drunk to the bridal bed and breaks up the wedding, are brilliantly described, and Dostoevsky, who, like all the nineteenth-century romantics, excelled in describing the moods of crowds, keeps us in uncertainty until the end. And, exploring all the possibilities, that is to say raising all the mystifying issues which can be raised, as if he were writing a long novel and not a short story, he ends with justice to all. Ivan Ilyitch is not alone to blame. The poor clerk, with his pride and his private quarrels with his wife, is in a muddle as well. We cannot be made responsible for the unnerving manners of our friends. No one is malignant, but everyone is to blame. It is all very well to talk about humanity and brotherhood, but be careful that in doing so you are not forgetting your own pride and the labyrinth of pride in other people. Each man and woman, I warn you (says Dostoevsky, the incurable novelist), is capable of becoming a novel in himself, a novel by Dostoevsky, moreover. I warn you it is impossible to do anything whatever with any human being, unless you are fully willing to take the tumultuous consequences of his being human.

As I said before, it is odd that Dostoevsky should ever have been regarded as the novelist of the isolated soul. I can only suppose that very few readers read these comedies and do not know *The House of the Dead*, that wonderful documentary mine in which Dostoevsky describes his Siberian experiences, without hysteria or ideological puffing. In the great novels he is so blatantly the writer of spiritual headlines; in *The House of the Dead* he was content with the laconic news. No one who has read it can say that he ignored the problems of society. Like Balzac, on the contrary, he plunders society. He is acutely aware of class differences. So gregarious and populated is the unconscious, that in the typical dreams of his characters, crowds of people will appear. There are, for example, the dramatic dreams in *The Eternal Husband*, Dostoevsky's most purely intellectual and accomplished comic novel. The sinister gangs of dream figures stamp up Veltchaninov's stairs and point at him with horror as he lies asleep in his guilt. In this novel it has been said that Dostoevsky parodied himself—it was written after *The Idiot* and *Crime and Punishment*—and certainly all his ideas are here: the double, the unconscious, the fantasies, dreams, persecutions, suspicions, shames and exchanges of personality. Even a child is tortured. But surely this comic masterpiece, a comedy which (as always in Dostoevsky) carries its own underworld along with it, stands completely on its own feet. In the first place the growing of Veltchaninov's sense of guilt from a vague irritation to mind and health into definite consciousness, is described with wonderful objectivity and suspense. The value of psychological analysis to the novel lay, for Dostoevsky, in its contribution to drama. Psychology was dramatic; for us it becomes more and more a metaphor or explanation. The farcical duel between Veltchaninov and the eternal husband whom he has cuckolded, has an undertone of imaginative seriousness which makes the farce more dangerous. Dostoevsky, once more, is pushing things to extremes because, at the end of the extreme, is the pity of human nature. Half way—where other writers leave this kind of story—lie the conventions of melodrama and intellectual comedy; and, mad though the story is, it is full of the madness we all know about in the lives of people. The madness is the madness of life, not the madness of the mind. No one will ever accuse Dostoevsky of failing to complicate a situation, and this book is a succession of superb unexpected scenes. The very last one, in which "the eternal husband" is being bullied by his new wife, and has silently to beg Veltchaninov not to cuckold him again, is one of the funniest and most moving in comic literature. The unconscious, Dostoevsky discovered, gave probability to the most bizarre situations and turned coincidence into fate. And, it is interesting to note, in the middle of this comic novel there occurs one of the very few pictures of normal, happy, family life to be found in his work.

The Eternal Husband is no doubt so refreshingly precise in its psychology, so well composed and economically written, so brilliant in its commentary because—for the time being—Dostoevsky had exhausted his anxiety for salvation. This is his one Western novel. It came from that part of him that liked to cut a social figure, in a rare period of equipoise and untroubled self-satisfaction. It has the genial air of a successful presumption, and it might easily have been written in our century, not his. And yet it could not have been. For the effect of psychological intuitions and discoveries upon the novel was to make it reminiscent and autobiographical; whereas in Dostoevsky's hands the novel became inventive and dramatic. How rich *The Eternal Husband* is in episodes: the absurd house-watching scene, the dramatic interviews, the discovery that the husband is torturing his child, the scandal at the brothel, the visit to the country, the nights which husband and lover spend together, where the husband first poses as his wife's ghost and later attempts murder. When one compares the realism of Chehov with the romantic realism of Dostoevsky one sees how much was thrown away when novelists threw out plot. When plot went, I am inclined to think, the isolation of characters began; and though, by Dostoevsky's time, plots were stale, he showed that even the most hackneyed and novelette-like plot, became rich and new when it was replenished by a new view of human nature.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *Dostoevsky*. By Janko Lavrin. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

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THE LEFT WING

Inside the Left. By FENNER BROCKWAY. *Allen & Unwin.* 15s.

Fate Has Been Kind. By RT. HON. F. W. PETHWICK LAWRENCE. *Hutchinson.* 15s.

It's grand to think that most of the biographies that will appear in the next generation will be enlivened by Bernard Shaw's correspondence. There can be few people who have made a name in art, literature, the theatre or progressive politics during the last half century who have not, stowed away somewhere, a package of Mr. Shaw's letters. And, incredible though it may seem, very few of these letters will not be worth publishing. Mr. Brockway's biography includes a couple of pages of first-class Shaw. The I.L.P. had got itself turned out of the Labour Party and had produced a Manifesto, even more impracticable than most I.L.P. documents. Mr. Brockway sent it to Mr. Shaw, who, after brushing it aside with a few blows of common sense, wrote a model Manifesto explaining that the I.L.P.'s original purpose in creating a Parliamentary Labour Party had been successful, but that the result had only been to prove that "the introduction of Socialism by the existing Parliamentary procedure is impossible, and that the attempt disables and wastes its leaders." As for the Communist Party, Mr. Shaw declared it ruined itself by its dependence on Moscow. As a result there was no effective British Socialist Party at the very time, Mr. Shaw added, that the rise of Fascism had made its emergence more important than ever before.

Why have Socialist organisations proved incapable of seeing as far as Mr. Shaw? From what inner compulsion do Left bodies break into warring fragments and tamely leave the keys of power in the hands of their enemies? Hitler summarised the weaknesses of Social Democrats with cynical clarity in *Mein Kampf*, but the book that fully analyses this failure of the Left to unite in the fight for power has yet to be written. When it is written some of the most instructive material will be found in the autobiographies of contemporary Socialists.

Here are two examples. Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Brockway have much in common. They are both undoubtedly sincere men, disinterested to an unusual degree; both believed that capitalism would lead us to disaster and were prepared to spend their lives in trying to bring about a Socialist order, both at different times went to prison for their convictions, both were pacifists who found the simplicity of their faith untenable in the final test. Here, however, the resemblance ends. Mr. Lawrence belonged by birth to the ruling class; he went to Eton and Trinity, he was fourth wrangler and a Fellow of his College; he played games all his life and was extremely good at them. Strenuous and honest and of a happy temperament, fate was indeed kind to him. He evolved a serene philosophy of life which he explains in his last chapter. At twenty-four he was still completing the period of preparation for his career. All the doors were open to him. When he visited India his political opinions were no handicap; important officials who had known him at Cambridge vied with one another to give him hospitality. His career was pleasantly diversified by wonderful holidays in the Far or the Middle East, on the Continent or in California. He had no personal grudge against the society into which he was born; a conscientious and thoughtful man, he saw its evils and sought a career in changing them. But he could not see the problems in terms of class war; he could take office and fit into the administrative machine as readily as a Tory or a Liberal. The most strenuous fight of his life was when he and Mrs. Lawrence teamed up with Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel. And this is the most interesting section of an agreeable and thoughtful autobiography. He gave to the cause of woman's suffrage probably the best years of his life, as well, incidentally, as almost all his fortune.

Mr. Brockway also worked for women's suffrage, for peace and for Socialism. He came from a different strand of the social fabric. The son of a missionary, born in India, he was educated at Eltham College and left early to learn shorthand at Pitman's. He was good at Rugby football, but he was immersed in politics on his own, earning eighteen shillings a week at an age before Pethwick Lawrence had discovered any social responsibilities. Indeed, he was caught at school canvassing at a by-election when he should have been in bed, and regarded himself "as a martyr in the cause of progress victimised for my political activities." He was influenced by Silvester Horne, R. J. Campbell and, above all, Keir Hardie. In prison as a pacifist in the last war he describes in a passage of genuine literary power how he watched, unknown from his cell, while Roger Casement took his silent and dignified farewell of the world before his execution by the British. Probably Brockway's most valuable achievement was the book he wrote with Stephen Hobhouse on prison conditions; it played an important part in procuring the changes in prison administration that were carried through after the last war.

Most of the rest of Brockway's story is the record of efforts to organise the international working class (which showed only a limited interest) against war, against capitalism, against Fascism. He fought hard on the crucial issue of Spain, characteristically supporting P.O.U.M., an organisation of often excellent individuals who thought that revolution was not only necessary and desirable, but also compatible with waging a war. Their courage and character, their high ideals and genuine sense of working class solidarity convinced Brockway that he had been wrong in always opposing war on all issues; it was possible to fight, he decided, without selling oneself to the devil. But as "Trotskyists," he and the P.O.U.M. together encountered the bitter and unscrupulous hostility of the Communist Party. I think Brockway and his friends were wrong in this unhappy controversy. But it was a battle between people whose first concern was to live a particular kind of moral life and people who did not mind how many people they vilified or destroyed provided they won. The conflict is irreconcilable. Brockway and many English Socialists like him fail as politicians, because they have never faced the necessity of a political analysis as ruthless as the military appreciation that a commander-in-chief demands before a battle. They are fairly dubbed sentimentalists, for they assume, until the facts batter them over the head, a number of propositions about the working classes, about capitalists, about society, which rest on no surer foundation than their own generous hope. They spend their energy deciding what it is right to do even when they have no chance of doing it. Their mistake is just the opposite of the error of the Communists who forget that ends are affected by the means used to attain them. They are so concerned about the morality of the means that they forget to ask whether they are in fact at all appropriate to attain the end in view.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE CRISIS OF POETRY

The Heritage of Symbolism. By C. M. BOWRA. *Macmillan.* 15s.

As in the evolution of religions, of social patterns, of trades, so there is a cycle to be observed in the development of poetry. If all art constantly aspires to the condition of music, it is in the first half of the XVIIth century that we first find poetry acquiring that peculiar tension between the image and its predicate which adumbrates the effects of musical phraseology and comes, by the degree of its difference from the poetry which preceded it, to deserve a name of its own. That name (not however bestowed at the time) is Symbolism. In one sense, of course, all art must be symbolic, for if it does not suggest the universal through the particular, it simply bears witness to so much undigested experience. But it would be idle to deny that with Donne, Quarles and Vaughan in England, and Scève, Louise Labé and Tristan l'Hermite in France, something very special happened to the characteristic relationship between the subject of the poet's contemplation and the other things (ideas, objects, events) which it seems to him to resemble. The crisis—the tension—arises when the relationship becomes one of equals, and a new poetic organism is thereby precipitated. If this were not so, Shakespeare's sonnets would be as Symbolist as anything by Donne, and a lyric by Hugo the same *in kind* as one by Valéry. But it is in the nature of tension to require a relief, and the Symbolist crisis was no exception to the rule. There must come a moment when the knot cannot be more elaborately symmetrical, more perfectly tight: after the rococo style of the Metaphysicals, the plain speaking of the Restoration and the Augustan age were inevitable; after Valéry, Louis Aragon; after Yeats, Auden.

In the second cycle we have noticed the central figures are Mallarmé and Rimbaud. In what I take to be the best general consideration of the subject to date, Dr. C. M. Bowra interprets the five great poets (Valéry, Rilke, George, Blok, Yeats) who inherited the method of which Mallarmé was the great theoretician, as well as the chief practitioner. I say "interprets," because not the least of Dr. Bowra's virtues is the courage with which he is prepared to state, in the plainest of words, the "meaning" of even the obscurest passages of these poets. To elucidate their symbols requires the searchlight of an extremely clever, realistic intellect. This is a field where critics are apt to cheat—to wriggle, masked in words, through the cloud of tear gas; and those who are not tempted to do this are seldom attracted to the place of the event. When a great classical scholar glares benevolently at a Symbolist poet, we may expect the result to be startling.

"It does not matter how difficult poetry is, provided that in the end we can relate it to ourselves and grasp it as an experience akin to our own." That is a crux; it is also a standard by which much superficially attractive poetry must in the end be agreed to fail. The opaquely private image, like the illegible hand-writing, is a sign of contempt for other people—*i.e.*, of reality itself—a vice which brings its own punishment. Mallarmé himself was not always guiltless of perpetrating this kind of "poetry for poets," and his example was followed, not only by talentless imitators like Kahn and Samain and the egregious author of *Pierrot Lunaire*, but at times by great poets like Rilke and George. Even an enthusiast like Dr. Bowra cannot stomach George's *Stern des Bundes*, but I feel that he sometimes claims more universality for Rilke than is due to him. Yet I think he shows conclusively—and this is an important point—that Blok and Yeats are the really conspicuous victors in the battle between world and dream which the Symbolist crisis perpetually creates. How great a poet Blok is I cannot, having no Russian, estimate. Dr. Bowra's claims for him are very great, and his judgment is elsewhere such as to make me suspect that the beauty of Blok's poetry lies in some such untranslatable subtlety of syntax or vocabulary (or both) as distinguishes the later Yeats. Lacking these advantages he would not, according to the translations, amount to more than a rather profounder Verlaine. Be that as it may, it is plain that his vision won through the closed world of dream to the endless prospects of life itself, so that his poetry gained in depth by the improvement in the scope and efficacy of his symbols. The same is exactly true of Yeats, of whom Dr. Bowra very truly says that, in his last period, "he had at last put into his poetry the qualities which had for long been prominent in his conversation." And again: "What counts in this last poetry is its zest."

The Symbolists are not usually conspicuous for high spirits, and the beauty of two of the greatest of them—Valéry and Rilke—depends, in the one case, on a kind of *mystique* of the body, and in the other upon a philosophy of experience which looks esoteric but is not really so. Dr. Bowra's essay on Valéry is wonderfully exhaustive; no one but he could have reduced a poem like *La Jeune Parque* to its lowest terms without sub-

tracting an iota from our enjoyment of it. Between this hermetic spell—as lovely in its way as any poem ever written—and mysticism of the Hopkins variety is a connection perhaps altogether too hard to trace. Dr. Bowra has not attempted to trace it. Here one might have expected some reference to Patmore, which is not, however, forthcoming. Instead the reference is kept strictly to what each poem can be made to yield; even so, what counts for most is seen to be the "sustained tone" of the utterance.

Rilke is quite another matter, though in what is perhaps his finest poem (*Le Cimetière Marin*) Valéry constructed a bridge between them. According to the view of poetry evolved by Rilke, "What is seen and felt becomes spiritual only when we have absorbed it and given it a new existence." This is really no more than the Great Claim of all art (and incidentally of most religions); that experience is only valuable in so far as we distil from it essences. These essences are pictured, at their grandest and most splendid, in the *Duineser Elegien* and the *Sonnette an Orpheus*. Such essences are the food of the spirit; to have increased their number and vividness is the glory of these poets. In that sense we can say of all of them, as Dr. Bowra says of Rilke: "For him poetry was not one activity among others but a fundamental power."

About Rilke one need feel no ultimate doubts, though I am glad to see his lapses of taste noticed (with an acute comparison to Keats). But Stefan George is far more difficult to assess, and one feels a certain embarrassment underlying Dr. Bowra's very able encomium. Personally I believe that George's genius was considerably impaired by a maniacal conceit and an artificial personality which went far to ruin his work. From the early poems to the end of *Das Jahr der Seele* is a steady crescendo; but the hieratic pose of George's middle period has in it so much of affectation that one begins to sympathise with Heine's retort to Platen, unfair as that was. The German aesthete is usually rather a painful object to contemplate, and George did everything to aggravate the impression of pretentious and humourless insincerity which the type disengages.

The question remains a vexed one, though Dr. Bowra as usual does a great deal to disentangle it. Indeed, the farther one reads in this most excellent book the more one admires it, for the rather flat and jerky style with which it opens soon gives way to more expressive periods. Not much escapes this critic, but I find it difficult to see how he has managed to write a book about the post-Symbolists which avoids all reference to Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations*—surely a capital document in the case.

Symbolism, at any rate in its stricter forms, is over for the time being. The key was too high to be sustained, and Yeats, who showed his juniors the way to modulate out of it without losing intensity, has handed over the essentials of the method to Day Lewis, MacNiece and others of the new generation who are compounding with our emphatic age to produce a rather different kind of poetry—one in which image and object are not fused but placed side by side in the Elizabethan style, to send out a double instead of a single beam of illumination. The cycle may be expected to pursue its lengthy course. Meanwhile, the young poets of to-day would not, I feel, demur at Dr. Bowra's ascription to their work of one of Mallarmé's more characteristic lines:

"*Tison de gloire, sang par écume, or, tempête!*"

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

TRUMPETS AND PENNY WHISTLES

An Anthology of War Poetry. Edited by JULIAN SYMONS. *Pelican Book.* 9*d.*

Mr. Symons emphasises in a brief preface that his choice has been limited to *English* war poetry. Another restriction is the exclusion of Shakespeare; the warlike passages from the plays are, in his opinion, sufficiently well known. Both these restrictions seem somewhat arbitrary; for the first rules out Whitman, in whom for the first time realism and pity enter into war poetry, and the second robs the book of our greatest source of patriotic sentiment. However, there isn't room for everything, and Mr. Symons has preferred to employ his space in other ways. Side by side with some famous poems of war—Marvell's *Horatian Ode*, Lovelace's *To Lucasta, Going to the Wars*, Milton's sonnet to Fairfax, the Waterloo stanzas from *Childe Harold*—are printed anonymous ballads, marching songs, and contemporary broadsides. Often these have a simple journalistic vigour of their own. They tell a story—for example, of the woman soldier wounded at the siege of Cork:

On the Irish shore,
Where the canons did roar,
With many stout lads she was landed;
There her life to expose,
She lost two of her toes,
And in battle, in battle was daily commended.

This sad tale—"But she dy'ed, oh, she dy'ed ere the city she entered"—comes from Durfey's *Ballads*. All the great wars (including the present one) have produced a crop of anonymous verse which rarely finds a way into anthologies. "The French Deserter," from the Napoleonic era, has apparently not been printed before:

What a sorrowful life has a soldier,
O great God I find it to my sorrow;
I have deserted, I am taken by the constables,
To prison they have confined me.

And the new note in anonymous tragedy—ironical self-pity—is found in those verses of "The Dying Airman," reprinted from *The Oxford Book of Light Verse*:

A handsome young airman lay dying,
And as on the aerodrome he lay,
To the mechanics who came round him sighing,
These last dying words he did say:

"Take the cylinders out of my kidneys,
The connecting-rod out of my brain,
Take the camshaft from out of my backbone,
And assemble the engine again."

Since wars have usually been written about by those who enjoyed a safe distance in time or space, it is as well that an anthology of war poetry should have some common roughage. This is the particular merit of Mr. Symons's book. Also he has managed to insinuate a variety of attitudes, from that of the sergeant on the eve of attacking Quebec to Housman and his trooper lads. Among the familiar pieces Coleridge's "Fears in Solitude" has a new appeal, though it is not one of his best poems. *Hudibras* in the 1650's was complaining that the valour had gone out of war. Browning loved a drum, and John Scott (1730–83) hated it. Tennyson enjoyed an occasion calling for an ode. The difference between genuine sympathy for the soldier and the fake jollity inspired by a uniform can be measured in the poems here by John Clare and Hopkins; Hopkins is jaunty and jesuistical, and actually one feels in Clare's "The Soldier" something more akin to the spirit of "Felix Randall":

Home furthest off grows dearer from the way;
And when the army in the Indias lay,
Friends' letters coming from his native place
Were like old neighbours with their country face.

Another feature of *An Anthology of War Poetry* is the choice of single lines or couplets as well as whole poems. They add variety and sharpen the taste of any miscellaneous collection. Mr. Symons has not chosen his brevities especially well, but I liked this line:

Soldiers in peace are like chimneys in summer.

The author is George Herbert. Nothing else of his, as we might expect, appears in these pages.

G. W. STONIER

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"WHEREAS I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE"

The Art of Seeing. By ALDOUS HUXLEY. *Chatto and Windus.* 7s.

When he was sixteen years old, Mr. Huxley had a bad attack of *keratitis punctata* which, he tells us, left him (after eighteen months of near blindness, during which he had to depend on Braille for his reading) with one eye just capable of light perception and the other with enough vision to permit of his detecting at a distance of ten feet the letter on the Snellen Chart which should normally be detected at two hundred feet. He had opacities of the cornea; and also suffered from hyperopia and astigmatism. His doctors advised him to read first with a powerful hand magnifying glass; and after a few years with spectacles. Things went on fairly well until 1939, when, in spite of the use of stronger and stronger glasses, the sight was steadily fading. Then he heard of the method of visual re-education invented by an American oculist, Dr. Bates, who, in 1920, had written a book called *Perfect Sight Without Glasses*, which had made a large number of converts among the American laity, some of whom were specially trained to carry on the teaching and the technique. To one of these disciples Mr. Huxley expresses gratitude, as it was "to her skill as a teacher" that he owed the almost miraculous improvement in his vision which he describes. "Within a couple of months," he writes, "I was reading without spectacles, and what was better still, without strain or fatigue. Moreover, there were definite signs that the opacity in the cornea, which had remained unchanged for upwards of twenty-five years, was beginning to clear up. At the present time," he continues, "my vision, though very far from normal, is about twice as good as it used to be when I wore spectacles."

Had Dr. Bates contented himself with describing the process of re-education which Mr. Huxley and hundreds of other converts have found so effective, he almost certainly would have had a friendly reception from a large section of the orthodox medical profession. Unfortunately, he devoted an appreciable part of his book to expounding a physiologico-anatomical theory of his own, on the soundness of which he made his new technique depend. He described some seemingly irrelevant experiments and observations which were ridiculed in the medical press. Most orthodox doctors not unnaturally took it for granted that any technique based on so slightly supported a physiological theory was not likely to be sound. Here Mr. Huxley is very disarming. He writes: "Whether Dr. Bates was right or wrong in his rejection of the Helmholtz theory of accommodation I am entirely unqualified to say. My own guess, after reading the evidence, may be correct or it may be incorrect. I do not greatly care. For my concern is not with the anatomical mechanism of accommodation, but with the art of seeing—and the art of seeing does not stand or fall with any particular physiological hypothesis." Which inevitably reminds one of the convincing and sensible answer of the hitherto blind man, whom the orthodox Jews were trying to convince that the man who had cured him was a sinner, as recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

When, however, he proceeds to discuss the practice, theories and mentality of the orthodox oculist, Mr. Huxley throws aside all his straightforward modesty. He writes:

> Ever since ophthalmology became a science, its practitioners have been obsessively preoccupied with only one aspect of the total, complex process of seeing—the physiological. They have paid attention exclusively to eyes, not at all to the mind which makes use of the eyes to see with. I have been treated by men of the highest eminence in their profession, but never once did they so much as faintly hint that there might be a mental side to vision, or that there might be wrong ways of using the eyes and mind as well as right ways, unnatural and abnormal modes of visual functioning as well as natural and normal ones. After checking the acute infection in my eyes, which they did with the greatest skill, they gave me some artificial lenses and let me go. Whether I used my mind and bespectacled eyes well or badly, and what might be the effect upon my vision of improper use, were to them, as to practically all other orthodox ophthalmologists, matters of perfect indifference.

I have just been reading in the *Practitioner* for May, 1938, an article by a very prince of ophthalmic orthodoxy, Sir Stewart Duke-Elder, Ophthalmic surgeon to St. George's Hospital and Surgeon Oculist to the King. Here is an extract from his article:

> There is no question that refraction is too frequently treated from a mechanical view-point, and too rarely as a medical problem. The relief of eye-strain and the prescription of glasses is by no means a simple optical problem which begins and ends with a determination of the refraction: apart from the occurrence of large errors, it should be interpreted as an impairment of function, frequently of important diagnostic value, for here, as in all other conditions, the eye must be considered not only as in the body, but of it.

Narrowness of view and scientific dogmatism would seem not to be the peculiar possession of the physiologically trained. Does it so very much matter, from the layman's point of view, whether the so-called vegetative nervous system can be *directly* influenced by the conscious mind? All are agreed that it is constantly being influenced by the emotions. That a relation exists between seeing and such emotions as fear, anxiety, confidence, and so on, and that sight is affected by rest and overwork, are also matters of general agreement. It would seem to be by the influence of such "natural" medicaments that Mr. Huxley's own sight has, to the great relief of practically the whole reading public, been greatly improved.

The greater part of *The Art of Seeing* is, fortunately, an interesting, lucid and straightforward account of the treatment or training to which the author owes much. His occasional plunges into controversy about matters on which clearly he is not very well informed, and his presentation of the not very convincing yet dogmatic psychophysiology of which he has become an apostle, are calculated to prejudice as many readers as they will satisfy.

HARRY ROBERTS

THE ARCHER

Targets. By SAGITTARIUS. *Cape.* 5s.

Sagittarius, like Low, threatens to become a British institution. Journals in all parts of the world snatch examples of irony from her fire and display them as criticism from within the armed camp. This second volume has now been collected from her weekly shafts, and we see that her barbs have lost no point, and that many of them are likely to have pricking power so long as human nature, and especially political human nature, is what it is and always has been. The post-war Britain may be cleaned up, and reorganised on a scientific and economic basis in the fine Fabian way, but it is probable that even in that antiseptic future such a passage as the following will still carry a sting in its tail:

> St. George has taken up the sword,
> And keeps unsleeping watch and ward,
> To liberate from vile duress
> The Dragon's victims in distress.
> Surrounded by his knights and squires
> He kindles Britain's martial fires,
> While all the busy island stirs
> Loud with the hum of armourers,
> Loud with the hammer of St. George,
> And even louder with the sound
> Of private axes being ground.

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What gives this satirist's work so definite a sense of form is the detached and undoctrinaire standpoint from which she writes. It is a feminine one, because it is no respecter of pomp and office. In addition, it is the standpoint of an artist, because it assumes that individual contacts and experiences are more valuable than conventions and formulas. The shrewdness that results from these two faculties working together has two particular butts; officialdom, and the inhuman actions which result when the average person puts on, it may be unwillingly, the uniform of officialdom. About the instructions issued to civilians in the event of invasion, forbidding them to take independent action, Sagittarius says:

> Scorched earth, once invasion has started,
> May be on a scale immense,
> But scorching done by the stouthearted
> Becomes an offence.
>
> With the Home Guard invaders impeding
> It behoves every stouthearted man
> To keep the invasion proceeding
> According to plan.

Add to these native qualities a considerable scholarship, a sound technique in verse-making, and a quick intelligence in current affairs, and you are on the way to discovering the recipe for Sagittarius's success as a satirist.

RICHARD CHURCH

Week-end Competitions

No. 684

Set by Fred Oyster

The usual prizes are offered for the best poem, of not more than fourteen lines, on wines we can no longer enjoy.

RULES—

Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, March 22nd.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 681

Set by Roger Marvell

A rumour from the Elysian Fields suggests that Gibbon is engaged upon a history of the Rise and Fall of the Nazi Empire. Competitors are invited to submit footnotes from this work, on the assumption that the historian still employs footnotes for comments ill-suited to the dignity of the text.

Report by Roger Marvell

The entries disappoint. Too many competitors were content to provide a passage that would be appropriate in the text, though they were asked for a footnote such as those wherein Gibbon indulged his malicious wit, his taste for the indecorous, or his almost Flaubertian interest in human silliness. Let me quote, almost at random, two specimens:

> If the satyr were the orang-outang, the great human ape (Buffon, Hist. Nat. tom xiv. pp. 43, etc.), one of that species might actually be shown alive at Alexandria in the reign of Constantine. Yet some difficulty will remain about the conversation which St. Anthony held with one of these pious savages in the desert of Thebais (Jerom, in Vit. Paul. Eremit. tom 1. p. 238).
>
> Theodora surpassed the Crispa of Ausonius (Epigram LXXI) who imitated the capitalis luxus of the females of Nola. See Quintilian, Institut VIII 6, and Torrentius ad Horat. Sermon l.c. sat. 2, V. 101. At a memorable supper, thirty slaves waited round the table; ten young men feasted with Theodora. Her charity was universal.
>
> Et lassata viris, necdum satiata, recessit.

Such footnotes are artfully employed to refresh the reader by transporting him for a moment as it were from the study to the *salon*. Unluckily some of the competitors who chose suitable subjects were less felicitous in their mimicry of the Gibbonian style. Sir Robert Witt wrecked a promising entry by interpolating "See my learned and copious notes on this subject written in Pre-Elysian days"—a boast improbable in its simplicity, unless the historian be thought to have deteriorated in Elysium. It is surprising that no entry was prompted by the descendants of Gibbon's friend, who wrote upon his advice a History of Greece. I recommend that prizes of 15*s.* go to Yorick, Pibwob, Douglas Hawson and Leslie Johnson, and consolation prizes of 6*s.* to J. W. F. Hurford, F. H. King, A. S. Hardwick and Ignotus.

TEXT.—". . . in the absence of any more direct or certain evidence than I have been able to discover, the true cause of the *hegira* of this favourite of the Lord of the German Reich, whether personal or political, must remain for the judicious historian a matter of dubiety.[87] . . ."

NOTE.—87. It is permissible, however, to remember that, if personal rather than political motives are to be looked for, the Favourite of a Tyrant may reasonably desire to escape the bonds, or to evade the responsibilities, of favouritism. In a somewhat similar hierarchy, it is related by Greek and Roman mythologists, that the youth Ganymede was required by the Fuehrer of Olympus to be something more than a simple Cup-Bearer. (YORICK)

1. By the adoption of an alias he repeated the unavailing wile of lesser criminals, and saved a fifth of mankind from execrating and mispronouncing the appellation of Schickelgruber.

2. The letters B.F. inscribed upon their wearing apparel were open to a less dignified interpretation. (PIBWOB)

SECOND FRONT.—This curious appellation ignored the existence of Fronts in China, Burma, North Africa, the islands of the Pacific, the Naval Fronts on the Seven Seas and the Air Fronts in the numberless skies of the world. Those who named it Second, however, begrudged even that order, for they placed the Russian Front First and the rest nowhere.

NUISANCE RAIDS.—A nuisance raid meant, to both sides, a raid in which mainly civilians were affected, a civilian being, to the military mind then, as always, but a nuisance. (DOUGLAS HAWSON)

1. I have elected to rely upon a characteristically restrained account in *The Times*. Readers who prefer a more lively version may consult the *News of the World*, which assigns a very curious reason for the Fuehrer's conduct. The unwonted silence of the exuberant Garvin amazes the psychologist and perplexes the historian.

2. As he appeared to be not insensible to the charms of the fair sex, his continued celibacy caused surprise. I have considerably mollified the aspersions of those contemporaries who have indulged their fancy in assuming that his amorous tastes were not entirely correct. (LESLIE JOHNSON)

4. That Spanish neutrality was preserved as it was suggests that Mussolini who had been an example for Hitler had become a warning to General Franco. (J. W F. HURFORD)

It was customary for weekly reports of Rommel's death to circulate in the Arab bazaars. I ascribe to the same cause the concurrent rumour in Britain that Major Attlee was about to be elevated to the peerage. (F. H. KING)

65. Von Streicher (On Racial Purity Vol. 1, page 25). His fastidious delicacy complains of the Jews, strange and perverse cunning, and their utter brutality to the simple and ingenuous Germans, blind to their danger and too chivalrous to use their undoubted power. (A. S. HARDWICK)

(*b*) It cannot be supposed, however, that the assassination was entirely, or even partly, prompted by the virtuous horror with which the Reichskanzler professed himself to have been affected; indeed, some credence may be extended even to the vulgar opinion of the time: that the loose captain was occupying too much "Lebensrachen" (as it was jocularly called) at his master's side, and had thus excited, first the envious cupidity, and, at length, the murderous impulses, of his fellow-sycophants. (IGNOTUS)

Company Meeting

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY

RECORD VOLUME OF TRAFFIC

THE annual general meeting of the Great Western Railway Company was held on March 10th in London.

Sir Charles J. Hambro, K.B.E., M.C. (the chairman), in the course of his speech, said: Notwithstanding the many difficulties arising from shortage of staff, lack of accommodation and food rationing, all grades have responded magnificently to the calls which have been made upon them, and a special tribute is due to the women, now numbering nearly 16,000, who are performing their duties in a highly praiseworthy manner.

The greater part of the net Revenue of £6,932,746 is represented by the fixed annual payment which we receive under the Railway Control Agreement. The excess of £262,143 over this fixed payment is, subject to minor adjustments, the net income from sources not coming within the scope of the fixed payment, and with the balance of £263,938 which was brought forward from last year, the amount available for dividend on the Consolidated Ordinary Stock is £2,206,915, which enables us to recommend a dividend of 2½ per cent. for the half-year ending December 31st last, making 4½ per cent. for the whole year, with a carry-forward of £275,077. This compares with the dividend of 4 per cent. for the previous year when the carry-forward was slightly lower.

HIGH STANDARD OF EFFICIENCY

In recommending an increased dividend the Board were influenced by the fact that the large majority of railway stockholders are persons of limited means, or bodies representing them, who, in pre-war days, whole-heartedly supported the policy which this company followed, of subordinating dividend distribution to the attainment of a high standard in the maintenance and improvement of the undertaking. This policy is the key to the efficiency of our wartime operations. During the long period of trade depression which preceded the war, and in spite of the fact that we were faced with acute and unregulated road competition, we never relaxed our efforts to improve our facilities. The fulfilment of this programme was of great assistance to the Government in their efforts to relieve unemployment, and many of the schemes have proved to be of inestimable value in the prosecution of the war effort. It can safely be said that, at the outbreak of war, the British railways were as efficient and as well organised as any railways in the world, and I cannot help feeling that the public do not yet appreciate the enormous benefit this has been to the country in the present emergency.

Although we carried in the past year the greatest volume of traffic in our history, the demands on us continue to increase. Shortage of labour and materials is becoming more acute owing to war demands, and will add to our difficulties in carrying out essential new works and maintenance.

The future of all forms of transport in this country is a subject which opens a wide field for discussion when consideration is being given to schemes for post-war reconstruction. It is difficult to foresee what the post-war requirements may be, but, in any case, it should be obvious that those who have spent their lifetime in dealing with the many complex problems associated with the movement of passenger and freight traffic are the ones best qualified to advise the Government on the steps to be taken to meet such requirements with the greatest degree of efficiency and economy.

The report was adopted.

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